

Chinese ship awaits inspection

DAMMAM (R) — The Chinese ship Yinhe, which Washington has accused of carrying banned chemicals destined for Iran, is still awaiting inspection by Saudi and Chinese officials, shipping sources said Saturday. They said it was not yet clear when the inspection would start, how long it would last nor how many containers were due to be searched. Chinese and Saudi officials have been discussing how and when the ship, which docked at the Saudi Gulf port of Dammam on Thursday, would be inspected. Diplomats said a U.S. technical team might take part in the inspection process as advisers. One diplomat said inspection could last a week to 10 days. "It depends on how many containers will be inspected," he added. A member of the Chinese delegation said the inspection could start within a day or two. Shipping sources said 38 crew members aboard the Yinhe, which has been tailed by U.S. warships since it entered the region to Aug. 3, were ordered to stay aboard the ship. The ship's arrival in Dammam coincided with an announcement by Washington that it was imposing economic sanctions on China and Pakistan for alleged arms control violations.



Arafat took 'big risk' — Shaath

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The West Bank and Israel should realise that Yasser Arafat took a "big risk" in supporting the Gaza-Jericho first option for peace, Mr. Arafat's political advisor Nabil Shaath has told an Israeli politician. "It is important that the West and Israel realise that (Arafat took a big risk) for Mr. Arafat's gamble to succeed," Dr. Shaath told Dedi Zucker, a member of parliament belonging to the left-wing Meretz party, according to Mr. Zucker. Dr. Shaath also said that Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres had reached an "important agreement" in his behind-the-scenes meeting earlier this month with a top Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official in Scandinavia, and claimed that the political crisis in the PLO was "resolved," Mr. Zucker told AFP. Dr. Shaath contacted Mr. Zucker by telephone from Tunis. The two met in Cairo last month.

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Amal attacks SLA position

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Guerrillas early Saturday attacked a position of Israel's proxy militia in South Lebanon with automatic weapons but caused no casualties, South Lebanon Army (SLA) sources said. The pro-Syrian Amal militia claimed the attack on the SLA position in Saidoun near Jezzein in Israel's self-declared "security zone" of South Lebanon. SLA guns ripped by firing about 15 shells at the Iqlim Al Tuffah heights northwest of the southern port of Sidon, but also caused no casualties, Lebanese police said.

Iran opens ice plant, park on Abu Musa

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran on Saturday opened an ice-producing plant and a public park on Abu Musa, a disputed Gulf island claimed by both Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Islamic Republic News Agency, monitored in Nicosia, said that the two projects were built at a cost of \$450 million (\$273,000). Iran laid sole claim to Abu Musa last September, claiming the UAE, which had shared control over the island with Tehran since 1971. The issue has tarnished Iran's relations with the UAE and other Gulf countries. The strategic island is located at the only entrance to the oil-rich Gulf.

Bosnian Croats ready to agree to carve-up

GRUDE, Bosnia-Herzegovina, (AFP) — The self-styled Bosnian Croat parliament Saturday said it was "ready to accept" the Geneva plan to carve up Bosnia-Herzegovina, but only if the Serbs and Muslim-led government did so too. A resolution passed by the assembly (see page 10), meeting in special session here to discuss the Geneva plan, however, called for a number of "corrections" to be made to the maps dividing the country into loosely linked Croat, Serb and Muslim mini-states. "By accepting the Geneva project, the Croatian people of Bosnia-Herzegovina have made a heavy sacrifice," the resolution added.

Iran says it is not aiding PKK

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's interior minister, Ali Mohammad Besharati, on Saturday denied his country was helping Kurdish dissidents along the Turkish border, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. Mr. Besharati told Turkey's visiting assistant deputy interior minister, Riza Akdemir, that "Iran is not backing Turkey's opponents," according to IRNA. He quoted Mr. Besharati as saying that Iran sought "borders of friendship" with Turkey, its northern neighbour. The dissident Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) has been fighting for autonomy for Turkey's 12 million Kurds since 1984. The conflict has claimed more than 7,000 lives.

Pakistan extradites drug barons to U.S.

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan has ordered 17 of the country's most powerful drug barons to be extradited to the United States to stand trial, authorities said. The list includes Ayub Afridi, a former parliament member considered to be Pakistan's biggest drug kingpin, according to a report commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). All 17 suspects are under indictment in the United States, said a Western diplomat in Islamabad. Government officials said 11 are in prison here and the other six are in hiding, including Mr. Afridi.

U.S. treatment of sheikh upsets Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is unhappy with the United States for allowing Egyptian cleric Omar Abdul Rahman to enter the country, where he is becoming a hero, President Hosni Mubarak's spokesman said here Saturday. Mohammed Abdul Moneim told AFP that "the personality of Sheikh Abdul Rahman is not at all like its portrayal in the U.S. media, who have made him a hero and a big star even though he is not that important in Egypt."

Peres holds secret talks with Christopher

Combined agency dispatches

TEL AVIV — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met secretly with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in California, radio reports said Saturday. The talks came as Israel and the Palestinians seemed near an agreement over an interim peace plan for the occupied territories.

Mr. Peres was reporting to Mr. Christopher about talks with top Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official in Scandinavia over the plan to grant limited autonomy to the Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, army radio said.

Israeli radio reported late

Saturday that Mr. Peres was on his way back to Israel Saturday.

Mr. Peres left for the United States on Friday amid reports of an imminent historic breakthrough in peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Israeli radio said Mr. Peres held several hours of talks with his U.S. counterpart on the "Gaza-Jericho first" option.

Mr. Peres, who was accompanied by Israel's ambassador to the United States, Itamar Rabinovich, and an advisor, was due back in Israel on Sunday, the radio said.

Neither government would confirm or deny the meeting, in Mr. Christopher's summer home in Santa Barbara, had taken

place, but Mr. Peres did not turn up for an electoral meeting at which he was due to speak Saturday, sources close to the ruling Labour Party said.

Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal told the radio earlier that Israel and its Arab negotiating partners were "on the eve of a diplomatic breakthrough."

The Gaza-Jericho option would provide for an Israeli pull-out from the occupied Gaza Strip and Jericho, and Palestinian autonomy in those areas, as a step towards fuller Palestinian self-rule.

The Peres-Christopher meeting came three days before Mideast peace talks were to resume in Washington for an 11th round. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben-Ari would neither deny nor confirm the meeting.

Mr. Shahal confirmed it indirectly, telling the radio, "I wish him a good trip and fruitful discussion." He said: "The preparations being made today are to ensure this will be a fruitful round" of peace talks.

"We are witnessing a phenomenon of far-reaching political change," Mr. Shahal added, and noted that Israel faced "not very easy decisions."

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State Department confirms meeting

THE STATE Department said on Saturday that Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met secretly Friday and that progress was possible in renewed Middle East peace talks.

Department spokesman Michael McCurry said the two met at Point Mugu naval air station in Oxnard, California.

Mr. McCurry said in a statement that Mr. Christopher and Mr. Peres and others met for four hours and "their discussion reviewed ideas that will be developed next week when the Middle East peace negotiations resume in Washington."

He said he could give no details of the conversation "other than to say it makes clear that the parties in the region are focusing on the choices and planning that could make real progress in these negotiations possible."

PLO is still in crisis, but pressure eases

Combined agency dispatches

TUNIS — Yasser Arafat appeared Saturday to have calmed internal criticism of his leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in time for the next round of Arab-Israeli peace talks.

"As usual, Arafat emerges stronger. All what (opponents) said outside, we didn't hear about it inside the meeting, and Arafat has more powers in the conduct of the peace process," said Yasser Abed Rabbo, head of the PLO Information Department.

But participants at a two-day emergency meeting of the PLO's Executive Committee which ended early on Saturday said a crisis within the PLO organisation over the direction of the negotiations and a PLO cash crunch was unresolved.

Hardliner Taysir Khaled, upbraided by Mr. Arafat at the start of the meeting on Friday night for his call for the resignation of those directing the peace talks, said tensions with the PLO chairman had eased.

"He showed some receptiveness to the attitudes of the opposition, but regarding the core of the problem, he still follows the same policy, mainly in the peace process," Mr. Khaled told Reuters.

"Arafat has calmed down critics of his leadership and once

again has made the majority of the Executive Committee support his line," a senior PLO official, opposed to Mr. Arafat, told Reuters.

"But the crisis remains unresolved because the disagreements over the peace process and the effects of the financial crisis are deep."

Mahmoud Darwish, a noted poet in the Arab World, attended the meeting and stuck resignation last week from the 18-man executive committee, saying he wanted to devote himself to his cultural work, the sources said.

The PLO's representative in Lebanon, Shafiq Al Hout, who announced his withdrawal from the committee last Sunday, was likely to travel to Tunis for talks with Mr. Arafat, according to informed Palestinian sources.

But Mr. Darwish said his resignation from the committee stood.

Five members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, including team leader Faisal Hussein and spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi, who were scheduled to attend the second session were not present.

The delegation was cut in half this week due to financial constraints.

The five met Mr. Arafat on Friday afternoon, but were expected to participate in an enlarged Executive Committee ses-



Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat (left) Saturday shakes hands with Mahmoud Darwish, who said at a Tunis late Saturday, Palestinian officials said.

A sixth negotiator, Haidar Abdul Shafi, who heads the delegation at the bilateral Arab-Israeli talks, was expected Saturday in Tunis.

Palestinian sources have warned that another committee member, Abdullah Hourani, could pull out during the meeting. Mr. Hourani had described



King Hussein, Assad review Arab issues

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday contacted Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and exchanged views with him on current Arab issues, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

It did not give details. The Petra report came as Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese foreign ministers and the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) political affairs chief wound up a meeting in Beirut, Lebanon, on coordination ahead of the 11th round of Arab-Israeli peace talks (see separate story).

Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians announced after the meeting that they agreed to attend the talks, due to open in Washington Tuesday.

Jordan's Talal Al Hassan and Syria's Farouk Al Sharaa implicitly criticised the PLO at the Beirut meeting for not consulting them in advance over its acceptance of a limited Israeli withdrawal as part of a five-year interim Palestinian self-rule arrangement in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Shbeilat quits politics after criticising government, parties

By Wafa Amr
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Leading independent Islamist politician and former deputy Laith Shbeilat announced Saturday he was quitting political life to protest what he described as government's undemocratic practices and political parties' lack of credibility.

In a move reflecting his admission to failure in achieving political and economic reforms and his disappointment with official and popular political attitudes, Mr. Shbeilat said he decided to withdraw from the political scene and return to practising his engineering profession.

"I announce today that I have sufficed with 11 years of political activity ... and I request your permission to withdraw to practise my profession after long break," he said in a brief statement.

Mr. Shbeilat said from now on he would only participate in social and cultural events only. Despite previous threats to resign from political life, his move surprised many politicians who criticised him for abandoning the political battle at a crucial time of the country's history.

But the controversial Shbeilat, who refused to speak to reporters following his decision, felt he

was let down by his constituency and by political groups who remained silent and unmoved to counter what he saw as serious violations of democracy on the part of the government.

Mr. Shbeilat's friends said he felt he was fighting a fierce battle against "undemocratic forces" alone. "He had lost faith in political groups and individuals who joined him in his opposition of government's undemocratic practices ... they retreated when their own principles were put to the test," one of Mr. Shbeilat's close associates said.

"Political groups incite Shbeilat to lead the opposition, but in the end he emerges a lonely voice," he said. "He felt he was working alone without response from either the people or the political groups."

Mr. Shbeilat enjoys popularity and wide-spread respect, especially among middle-class professionals. He has always been a vocal advocate of human rights and democratisation, and an outspoken critic of the government's economic and political policies.

Long before liberalisation was introduced in Jordan in 1989, Mr. Shbeilat was among the very few who publicly challenged the government's policies and insisted on fighting corruption of former government officials.



Laith Shbeilat

Last year he was sentenced to 20 years in jail on charges that he belonged to an illegal Islamic political group called "Shabab Al Nafeer", which aims at toppling the regime, and for the acquisition of illegal automatic weapons and explosives.

Days after the trial, His Majesty King Hussein issued a general pardon which included Laith Shbeilat, a move political observers considered as an attempt to defuse growing internal tensions in protest against Mr. Shbeilat's trial.

Mr. Shbeilat condemned the trial and accused the government of faking it in order to silence him.

"At the same time last year, there were attempts to liquidate and assassinate my life and my reputation through the so-called 'Al Nafeer' case," Mr. Shbeilat said in his statement. "The case revealed to me and to others the degree of official 'democratic' intentions in the country and it simultaneously confirmed to me and to my family the 'credibility' of political groups from the right and the left spectrum in defending human rights."

He implicitly criticised political groups for lacking political agendas and for not succeeding in representing people's aspirations. He said if they did not carry out their responsibilities, they would join the government in taking the blame for working against the interests of the country.

He criticised the government's decision to change the voting rules without parliament's approval, and had decided, before quitting yesterday, to take government to court for what he considered the unconstitutional and undemocratic move of dissolving Parliament and issuing a provisional election law in the absence of Parliament.

"With pain and bitterness I say

that the new provisional law adds important negativity to other negative elements..." he said in his statement.

Some political observers criticised Mr. Shbeilat's shortness of breath in fighting the battle for democracy.

"The battle for democracy is a real battle, and democracy is a very long and painful process. Thus patience is needed," said a noted political observer who preferred anonymity.

"The democratic game requires playing it to the end, and resigning is one way of admitting defeat," he said.

Many political observers viewed the Muslim Brotherhood's decision to participate in the Nov. 8 elections despite previous threats to boycott as a political tactic which offered them credibility with the regime and their constituencies.

Leading Brotherhood figure Abdul Rahim Akour said Mr. Shbeilat should have been more patient before taking his decision. "We are in an unfortunate situation now, but we feel the worst has still not come and the efforts of an important, political player like Shbeilat is needed in the near future," Mr. Akour said. Leader of the Jordanian Peo-

(Continued on page 3)

Arabs agree to go to 11th round of talks

Combined agency dispatches

BEIRUT — Arab parties to the Middle East peace talks announced Saturday they would attend the next round of negotiations amid some disunity within their ranks over a Palestinian proposal for limited self-rule.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez said at a news conference that the Arab parties "had agreed to participate in the 11th round" of peace talks opening in Washington on Tuesday.

He was speaking at the end of a coordination meeting which grouped together the foreign ministers of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the three countries negotiating peace with Israel, and the head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's political department as well as the foreign minister of Egypt.

Mr. Bouez, in response to reporters' questions, said what was "expected from the 11th round is very clear progress regarding comprehensive peace based on Israel's withdrawal from all occupied territories in line with the principle of land-for-peace."

According to sources close to the delegations to the meeting, the PLO's political chief, Farouk Kaddoumi, together with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa, explained to the participants the controversial "Gaza and Jericho first" option for limited Palestinian autonomy, which has divided the PLO and caused consternation among the Arabs.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa and his Jordanian counterpart Talal Al Hassan said they regretted the fact that the Palestinians "had not sufficiently informed them" about their acceptance of the option, underlining that this was not a criticism of it.

Mr. Sharaa said that "the explanations given by Mr. Kaddoumi were not sufficient."

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said last week he would support

the option, which allows for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Gaza Strip and the city of Jericho on the West Bank, followed by Palestinian autonomy there as a first step (see page 10).

The option is reportedly being studied in secret by top PLO and Israeli officials.

Mr. Arafat's statement prompted a storm of criticism from within the PLO and from Jordan, which said it had not been consulted about it. It received the support of Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres Thursday.

"Give me a better solution and we'll accept it," Saeb Erakat, one of the top Palestinian negotiators in the peace talks, retorted to the Arabs, according to a source who attended the Beirut meeting.

Mr. Hassan said the option had "repercussions on Jordan's national security and that is why we should have been consulted."

Mr. Sharaa called for total Arab coordination as the next two sessions of talks would mark a "turning point" in the peace process.

The final resolution adopted by the participants called on the United States, co-sponsor with Russia of the peace process, to act impartially.

"The Arab parties, however, call on the United States... to fulfill its role of full partner and to develop it in an effective and genuine way that guarantees impartial compliance with the principles of the peace process, notably the exchange of land for peace," the resolution said.

"The Arab parties at the peace talks also affirmed the need for solidarity and coordination between them... in defence of Arab rights," it added.

The document called for an Israeli retreat from all Israel occupied Arab and Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem, as stipulated by U.N. Security Council resolution 242, 338 and

(Continued on page 3)

Iraqis delay departure for talks with U.N. officials

AMMAN (Agencies) — An Iraqi delegation Saturday delayed its departure for talks at the U.N. headquarters in New York because the U.S. government would not provide protection, Iraq's official news agency said.

The technical team was scheduled to meet U.N. officials Tuesday to discuss long-term monitoring of Iraqi weapons sites and to review Baghdad's complaints that it is being bullied.

The delegation is led by General Amir Rashid, head of Iraq's military industrialisation authority. Gen. Rashid and at least three members of his team came to Amman Saturday to fly to New York.

International flights in and out of Iraq are banned under sanctions imposed after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait three years ago.

The Iraqis were not aboard the Royal Jordanian (RJ) airline flight they had booked when it left Amman for Amsterdam at 3 p.m. (1200 GMT) Saturday, airport and Iraqi sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Iraqi News Agency quoted a Foreign Ministry source in Baghdad as saying: "Our delegation cannot leave for New York because American authorities abandoned their responsibilities to provide protection for delegation members."

It was not immediately clear what sort of protection the Iraqis were seeking.

Gen. Rashid, reached by the AP over the phone in Amman, refused to explain the reason for the delay: "There was an announcement in Baghdad in that regard today and I don't have much to add to it," he told the Associated Press.

Asked if the team would return to Baghdad, he said: "I don't

know."

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Nancy Beck said she had no information on the issue of security for the Iraqis, adding: "I have a feeling this is a U.N. issue."

The general told Reuters: "We have delayed our departure because the Americans have not provided us with the security and protection that was previously agreed on."

"We have not cancelled our trip, we will wait here to see what will happen," Gen. Rashid added.

He gave no further details and refused to comment on the talks. "We will talk when we return from New York."

The arms control and monitoring talks between Iraq and the United Nations are part of an agreement struck last month during a visit to Baghdad by Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. commission scrapping Iraq's weapons.

Iraq, hoping to erase U.N. trade sanctions, said in a letter released on Friday the United States was keeping blackboard chalk out of the hands of Iraqi schoolchildren.

The letter to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali was released by Iraq's embassy in Amman.

In the letter, Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf wrote that U.S. British and French delegates on the U.N. trade sanctions committee were stopping basic school supplies from entering Iraq.

"These decisions show that the representatives of the U.S., Britain and France are still imposing on the committee in a premeditated manner decisions aimed at tightening the impact of the unjust siege imposed on the Iraqi people," he said.

Sales in the Clothing Dept.
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With elite force, U.S. calls Aideed's bluff

By Reid G. Miller
The Associated Press

MOGADISHU — With the arrival in Mogadishu this week of 400 elite U.S. army Rangers, Washington has sharply upped the ante on fugitive warlord Mohammed Farrah Aideed.

In gambling that he could weaken the resolve of the United Nations to stay the course in Somalia and reduce the power he grabbed for himself through civil war, Gen. Aideed has won a few small pots.

He has created sharp national differences over how best to deal with him — softly, as Italy and some others would have it, or firmly, as favoured by the United Nations and Washington.

He has slowed, but not halted, the relief and rehabilitation work the United Nations came to this shattered country to do. And he has set some private charities to grumbling that the focus of the humanitarian effort has been lost as the United Nations battles his terrorist acts.

He has eluded capture for more than two months and he has put the United Nations into a largely defensive posture, despite the fact that it has more than 34,000 troops from 28 nations in Mogadishu — 15,000 of them in Mogadishu.

But the price of Gen. Aideed's poker game has just gone up.

The Rangers give the United Nations some aces it has lacked — a highly skilled force schooled in night and urban warfare and equipped with some of the most sophisticated arms in the American arsenal. Reports in Mogadishu were reluctantly allowed to be on hand for the arrival Thursday of the first 65 Rangers, but then the U.N. military command barred them from the airport.

The decision was taken not to shield the Rangers from view, but to hide the weapons they brought with them on subsequent flights by Giant C-5 Galaxy transport planes from the United States.

The Rangers are known to be with helicopters equipped



A group of U.S. army Rangers near the door of a U.S. Blackhawk helicopter at Mogadishu airport Saturday. The first group of Rangers arrived Thursday amid protest demonstrations by Somalis.

to see and hear an enemy at night, with pilotless, virtually silent drone aircraft that can do much the same thing, with laser-guided missiles and a host of other ultramodern, lethal toys.

Because reporters were not allowed to see the weapons the Rangers brought with them, their specific mission remains a question mark.

"This is not an effort to go after one man," Kathleen Delaski, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said when the Rangers' deployment was announced. "It's an effort to improve the overall situation in Mogadishu."

Without specifying the particular task of the Rangers, Defence Secretary Les Aspin said in Washington Friday that the U.S. forces' mission is to make south Mogadishu, where Gen. Aideed has his stronghold, "secure," begin seizing heavy weapons from Somali warlords and establish police forces in the cities and perhaps other areas.

Could the Rangers snatch Gen. Aideed alive from his

stronghold with the stealth, skill and equipment needed to do the job with minimum casualties to Somalis and to themselves?

"Yes, they are capable of successfully performing the most difficult missions," said Major David Stockwell, chief spokesman for the U.N. military command in Somalia and himself a Ranger.

On the other hand, U.N. personnel are attacked virtually every night by small bands of Somali militiamen who lob mortar shells or grenades at their positions or engage them in small arms fire, usually with minimal casualties on either side.

The Rangers are particularly well suited to answering that kind of harassment by patrolling in darkness far beyond the perimeters of the United Nations' fortress-like compounds.

The United Nations ordered Gen. Aideed's arrest and put up a \$25,000 reward for him after a series of ambushes on June 5 that killed 24 Pakistani peacekeepers.

He has since been blamed

for dozens of other attacks, including one on Aug. 8 in which an American military vehicle was torn apart by a remote-control mine, killing four soldiers.

It was that attack that prompted President Bill Clinton to order in the Rangers.

Ship searched

French and American inspectors are searching a Sudanese ship, the Ysur, at Djibouti on suspicion it is carrying weapons to Gen. Aideed, U.S. officials said.

The ship has been in Djibouti since Tuesday. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the search was not complete and the results, therefore, unknown at this point.

U.S. authorities requested the search at Djibouti, where France has a military installation, and American inspectors are participating with France in the search of the Ysur, the officials told the Associated Press.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indonesia denies selling weapons to Iran

JAKARTA (R) — An Indonesian minister said on Saturday that helicopters which his country planned to sell to Iran would not be for military use. "I have read a news report that we intend to sell arms to Iran. That is not true," Research and Technology Minister Jusuf Habibie told reporters. The Far Eastern Economic Review weekly said in its latest edition that Indonesia was seeking to pay off its debt to Iran by selling seven Super Puma helicopters, worth \$100 million. It said the machines, built by Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara under licence from France, could be fitted for military use. The magazine said the United States was concerned by reports that Indonesia had agreed to sell arms to Iran. "We have signed an agreement to sell our Puma helicopter to Iran and it will be used for their oil industry operation and not for the military," Mr. Habibie said. "There is a difference between Puma for military and Puma for transport. Puma for military needs special specification." Mr. Habibie said, adding that France has agreed to the deal, Mr. Habibie said the helicopters had not been delivered to Iran because "there is a problem of letter of credit." He did not elaborate. Iran and Indonesia, both Muslim-dominated countries and oil exporters, agreed last year to boost bilateral non-oil trade from \$200 million, a year to \$1 billion. Mr. Habibie is the head of Indonesian Strategic Industries, including aircraft, shipping, and weapons.

Egypt minister appears in television

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's interior minister Hassan Ali Alfi appeared Friday night in his first lengthy television interview since Muslim militants wounded him in an assassination attempt last week. The 57-year-old minister, interviewed for 40 minutes by a satellite Arabic channel, the Middle East Broadcasting Centre, at a medical clinic in Switzerland, appeared to have recovered from the bomb attack which injured his right elbow. The Aug. 19 attack killed five people and wounded another 15 when militants set off bombs as his motorcade passed on its way to the ministry. "This incident has increased my determination for the truth and to work for the safety of my country. I shall continue stronger than before," said General Alfi, sitting in an armchair. He repeated government allegations that militants waging a bombing from abroad and said the issue was being investigated. "There is no doubt that there is cooperation from abroad from some people. There is finance, there is planning, there are individuals, this is certain information," he said. Egyptian security sources said before Gen. Alfi travelled to Switzerland that he might have a plastic joint fitted to his elbow and movement of his arm could be permanently impaired. The minister did not mention what medical treatment he had received, saying only he would return to Egypt in a few days.

Canada pays cash not camels for dead Somali

OTTAWA (R) — The family of a man who died in the custody of Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia demanded 100 camels as compensation, but settled for \$15,000 in cash, the Defence Ministry said on Friday. According to local custom, the family asked the Canadian government for 100 camels in compensation for the death of Shidane Abukar Arone inside the Canadian compound in Belet Huen, 200 kilometres north of Mogadishu. Among Somalia's semi-nomadic peoples, camels are a portable form of wealth and considered a means of currency. Canadian military officers negotiated with the family and clan leaders. "The family was happy this was a reasonable settlement and equivalent to 100 camels," a Defence Ministry spokesman said. Arone was allegedly tortured to death on March 16 after he was caught prowling inside the compound of Canadian troops serving on a United Nations peacekeeping mission. Four members of Canada's crack airborne regiment are facing court martial on charges of second degree murder and torture.

Nigerian Airways takes 420 pilgrims to Israel

ABUJA (AFP) — Nigerian Airways has made its first direct flight to Israel, and carried 210 Christian pilgrims to visit holy cities in the occupied territories. Israeli Ambassador Moshe Gilboa said Friday. Among the pilgrims who left on the Tel Aviv bound flight Thursday was writer Abiola Ellegbede, a relative of Moshood Abiola, purported winner of the annulled June election. Another 210 Christians leave to Tel Aviv Friday, Mr. Gilboa said, adding that since his arrival in Lagos 10 months ago, the number of Nigerian Christians visiting Israel and the occupied territories has doubled. Nigeria opened its first embassy in Israel last April and resumed diplomatic relations the following month. Nigeria, like most other African countries, severed relations with Israel as a result of the Arab-Israeli war in 1973.

Three killed in a Cairo jail brawl

CAIRO (AFP) — Three inmates, including a Muslim extremist and a Coptic Christian, were killed and 85 others injured early Saturday in a brawl at Cairo's Abu Zaabal prison, police said. They said an argument broke out when fundamentalist prisoners wanted to persuade other inmates to join extremist organisations. Inmates from both parties lunged at each other with wooden boards used in a building under construction, leading to the death of the three, including Coptic Christian Yusef Gindi Abdul Messih. Prison guards later regained control of the situation and the injured prisoners were taken to the facility's hospital, they said. Police meanwhile said a fourth person, fundamentalist Abdul Sattar Abdul Ilah, also incarcerated at Abu Zaabal, had died of electrocution while cooking over a hot plate.

Algerian wanted for 17 murders killed

ALGIERS (R) — An Algerian Muslim fundamentalist wanted for 17 murders was shot dead by security forces, the official AP's news agency said Friday. Mohammed Bouchelaghem, known as "the killer" and on the run since 1990 after escaping from Blida prison, was killed with two other men in Blida province, 50 kilometres south of Algiers. Security sources said the men were killed earlier this week and an automatic pistol taken during a triple murder recovered, along with sub-machineguns stolen from security forces. The automatic belonged to Redouane Zermani, 25, a policeman who was gunned down with his mother and brother in their home in the south Algerian suburb of Baraki early this month. Zermani's father and two other family members were wounded in the night

attack carried out by three men. APS said armed men killed a 48-year-old farmer in front of his wife and children this week in the eastern port town of Jijel. A "group of five terrorists armed with shotguns" killed another man, the father of six children, in Bouira, 90 kilometres southeast of Algiers, APS said. Officials use the term "terrorist" to describe armed militants blamed for violence in which more than 1,000 people have been killed in the past 19 months.

Turkish forces kill 14 Kurdish rebels

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish government forces killed 14 Kurdish rebels Thursday and Friday in east and southeast Anatolia, while one civilian was killed by the rebels, security officials said. Six rebels died near Cukurca and two others at Yuksekova in Hakkari province, said a statement against the Kurdish separatist rebellion. The government's campaign against the Kurdish separatist rebellion. Three other guerrillas who refused to surrender to security forces were killed near the eastern town of Bingol, while two more were killed near Siirt, southeast Turkey, the statement added. Meanwhile rebels of the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) killed one villager and abducted another in Armutlu in the eastern Erzurum region, the statement said, adding that the rebels had also torched the village. The latest casualties brought to 49 the number of deaths in the past four days in clashes between government forces and rebels.

Aladin trades in his lamp for a PC

CAIRO (AFP) — Aladin, a new children's magazine published in Egypt, features the legendary hero of a thousand and one nights — who instead of a magic lamp works his wizardry with a personal computer, its editor told AFP Friday. Since it first appeared on newsstands six weeks ago, the magazine has enjoyed widespread success and its 100,000 issues sell briskly every Thursday, he said. "Science is magic," according to Aladin's chief editor, Ezzat Al Saadani. Rather than draw his inspiration from a thousand and one nights, the magazine's hero is a whiz kid fully adapted to modern times. The magazine, a creation of the prestigious Al Ahram publishing house, hopes to dominate the children's publications market in Egypt and to penetrate the wealthy Gulf Arab states.

Turkey to receive 2,000 more Bosnians

ANKARA (AP) — A new group of 2,000 Bosnian Muslim refugees will arrive in Turkey next month from Croatia, a government official said Friday. State Minister Gunes Muftuglu, who oversees the refugee problem, said Turkish planes will start ferrying the refugees Sept. 2. Their transfer is expected to take about three weeks. Turkey, which has close cultural and historical ties with Bosnian Muslims, has already received some 20,000 of them as refugees since the start of the war in Bosnia. Turkey also became one of 17 countries to offer medical treatment for 1,250 sick and wounded Bosnians. Hospitals in Istanbul received 79 such patients earlier this month.

Attempted hijack foiled in Yemen

SANAA (AP) — Security officials overpowered an armed man Friday to prevent a hijacking aboard a Yemen Airlines domestic flight, police sources said. The Boeing 737 plane was travelling from Al Ghaydah to Rayan in the southern part of the country when the would-be hijacker brandished a pistol and a grenade and demanded to go to either Kuwait or nearby Oman, the sources said. But the security men, who routinely travel aboard Yemen Airlines flights to prevent hijackings, overpowered the man, according to the sources. The suspect was identified as Mayhoub Ahmad Farei, according to the security officials, who said his plane was not hijacked.

Bomb wrecks Lebanese businessman's car

LARNACA (AP) — A bomb destroyed the car of a Lebanese businessman in this coastal town at sunrise Saturday, police said. No one was injured, according to a statement issued by Larnaca police. The motive for the attack was believed to be rooted in a business matter, the statement said without elaboration. The car belonged to Nabil Zaimi, head of a Cyprus-based company dealing mainly with tobacco sales, and was parked outside his home when the bomb went off, the police statement said. Shortly after the blast, police searched Mr. Zaimi's yacht at the Larnaca marina and his office for bombs, but found nothing.

Chief editor of Salam arrested in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — The chief editor of a radical Iranian newspaper, Salam, has been arrested, the daily said in its Saturday edition but gave no reason for his arrest. Abbas Abdi, who was accompanied by his wife and children, was seized Thursday on the streets of Tehran on orders from the Islamic revolutionary courts, said the paper which has been a leading critic of the Iranian government. Mr. Abdi's wife told the paper she had been assured of her husband's "imminent release" if he cooperated with officials and answered their questions "sincerely."

Iranian dissident killed in Ankara

ANKARA (AP) — Gunmen fatally shot an Iranian dissident Saturday, the latest victim of a series of attacks on opponents of Iran's fundamentalist government, the Anatolia news agency said. The victim, identified as Behran Azadfar, 35, was killed by two men after he answered the door. A third person stood as a watchman in the garden of the house where Mr. Azadfar lived in an Ankara slum, the dispatch said. Mr. Azadfar's roommates told police he was a dissident who left Iran a year ago. They said the gunmen spoke Farsi. Anatolia said police searched hotels and other places frequented by Iranians. Iranian agents and anti-government groups have had encounters off and on its neighbouring Turkey since the overthrow of the Shah. Three Iranian dissidents were killed over the past year, and others have been murdered in western European countries. Turkish police also have arrested members of the Muslim extremist group Islamic Action, whose members are believed to receive training in Iran, for killing one of the dissidents.

Arafat under fire in occupied lands

By Manal Khader
Agence France Presse

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — A torn poster of Yasser Arafat hangs forlorn in the entrance to Maqassed Hospital atop the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem.

No one has bothered to replace the faded image of a man who not long was an undisputed symbol of the Palestinian struggle, defended with fierce pride throughout the occupied territories.

Today, open season has been declared on Arafat. Even local cadres of Fateh, Mr. Arafat's mainstream Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) group, have joined a growing clamour for change.

Nidal Al Jirmi, a 24-year-old from Balata refugee camp in Nablus, languished more than four years in Israeli jails for Fateh activities.

"The political system in the territories and abroad which has Yasser Arafat at the top does not function efficiently and urgently needs changing," he said.

Mr. Jirmi called for an "independent" leadership to be elected, sweeping aside the traditional groupings such as Fateh. Other Fateh cadres in Balata supported his view but prefer not to be named.

The PLO plunged into an unprecedented financial crisis since Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states cut multi-million dollar cash injections over PLO support for Iraq following the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

PLO funds to Palestinian institutions have been slashed by two-thirds here leading to an erosion of support for the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."

At the same time political divergences have emerged as crucial decisions approach on the Middle East peace talks. Haidar Abdul Shafi, who heads the bilateral peace delegation, has called for Mr. Arafat's power to be trimmed and greater PLO democracy.

Three delegation members tried to resign last week two PLO executive Committee members did walk out. Fateh's military chief in Lebanon, Munir Maqadha, urged Mr. Arafat to step down on Monday.

The PLO Black Panthers and Fateh hawks, two armed wings in the territories, issued a statement as early as May charging that militants were being dropped while politicians kept the money as the financial squeeze worsened.

Zuheir Dibi, editor of "The Nablus weekly," said: "I do blame the PLO for mismanaging money. Our people here and in Lebanon live in terrible conditions while money has been poured into pointless associations and bodies."

But Mr. Dibi, a Fateh supporter who spent more than 10 years in jail, also sees external factors at play beyond the control of Mr. Arafat or any other Palestinian leader.

West Bank Bir Zeit University student leader Ibrahim Khreishe blames Arab states.

"Arab countries have successfully imposed an economic and political siege against the PLO, something Israel never managed to do," he said bitterly.

"Arafat is in no way responsible for the Palestinian crisis. Foreign and Arab countries are waging war on the Palestinians to weaken our position at the peace talks," he added pointing a finger at the United States.

But he did not agree with Mr. Arafat's decision to cut university grants this year leaving thousands of students facing an uncertain future.

Faisal Hussein, the top Palestinian in the territories, believes the crisis is limited and will be overcome.

"Solving this crisis starts with telling the truth about what is happening to our people," he said.

Mr. Hussein's name topped a list of prominent Palestinians who signed a statement on Thursday pledging "unequivocal" support for the PLO and Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Arafat is "a victim of money," said Mr. Jirmi, whose sister was killed by Israeli troops in 1987.

"I do not regret not getting the money from the 'martyr' fund for my sister's death anymore. What I regret is that the money now goes to support a corrupt, bureaucratic administration that is not fit to represent the people."

The fund had an annual budget of \$15 million until the crisis and paid parents about \$70 a month for each "martyr."

In an interview on Wednesday, Mr. Hussein refused to admit that the payments had stopped, despite the public protests of Mr. Jirmi and other families who say they no longer receive the benefits.

Mohammad Mustafa, a sheikh in East Jerusalem, added his voice to the criticism. "I know we Palestinians have many doctors, engineers and geniuses, but why can't we find someone to take Arafat's place?"

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Le Monde est a Vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal de L'histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Step By Step
21:10 The Dream Machine
22:00 News in English
22:30 French series: "Le Gervais"

PRAYER TIMES

04:43 Fajr
06:04 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:37 Dhuhr
16:14 Asr
19:10 Maghreb
20:31 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifch, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 652785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637441
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Hot weather conditions will prevail and winds will be northwesterly to moderate and seas calm.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 21 / 36
Aqaba 26 / 42
Deserts 19 / 40
Jordan Valley 25 / 41
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 35.6, Aqaba 40, Humidity read-

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ramzi Maziwi 794788
Dr. Khalil Jbara 740740
Dr. Mohammad Otrari 612232
Dr. Mohammad Lobbach 683385
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fordou pharmacy 776336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649455
Shicisan pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Omari 272032
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Hibam Hyatt 982440
Khalid pharmacy 983417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Response 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 725111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 615615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381352
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 6442116
Al-Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 643622
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Stomach 6641714
Shumaili Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musader Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Abdi, Abdali 6641646
Jalal, Al-Mubajrah 7710133
Jalal, J. Ashrafiah 7711126
Army, Marka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ron Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ron Al Nafous Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)5320-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Bangkok (RJ)
06:15 Athens (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:45 Jeddah (RJ)
06:50 Lamez (RJ)
07:30 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
08:05 Beirut (RJ)
08:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
08:25 Madrid (RJ)
08:30 Istanbul (RJ)
08:35 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
08:35 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
08:35 London (RJ)
08:35 Athens (RJ)
08:35 Vienna (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:45 Larnaca (CY)
07:00 Bahrain (GF)
14:30 Moscow (SU)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
20:55 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 Beirut (RJ)
07:15 Athens (RJ)
07:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
07:45 Rome (RJ)
07:50 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
08:05 Vienna (RJ)
08:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
08:35 Istanbul (RJ)
08:45 Athens (RJ)
08:50 Riyadh (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:05 Agaba, Cairo (RJ)
09:15 New Delhi (RJ)
09:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
09:25 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
09:30 Bangkok (RJ)
09:35 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:05 Larnaca (RJ)
14:30 Doha, Bahrain (GF)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apples 620/530
Apricots 440/340
Banana (Mekummar) 680
Beans 620
Cabbage 180 / 100
Carrot 360/250
Cauliflower 300 / 220
Cucumbers (large) 200 / 120
Cucumbers (small) 340 / 250
Eggplant 160 / 100
Fig 350 / 200
Garlic 750 / 530
Grapes 480 / 400
Lemon 220 / 180
Marrow (large) 220 / 180
Marrow (small) 160 / 100
Mushroom 100 / 50
Okra 690/400
Onion (dry) 230 / 180
Orange 440/180
Peas 700/500
Pepper (hot) 220 / 120
Pepper (sweet) 340 / 220
Potato 240/180
Tomato 740/180
Watermelon 150/100

Cabinet approves amendments to internal ministry systems

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday approved the creation of an internal control department at the Ministry of Interior.

The new department will be responsible for examining, investigating and assessing all financial and administrative procedures and ensuring sound application of any related legislation.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali had instructed various ministries to create such departments to improve the efficiency of public administration.

The Cabinet also Saturday announced that financial incentives will be offered by the Ministry of Education to attract highly skilled and qualified personnel to work for the ministry in training teachers and helping implement reforms to the current educational system.

A third decision taken by the Cabinet Saturday affected retired engineers. Under the amendment, a member of the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) will get a maximum pension of JD 180 per month, provided he or she has paid monthly premiums to the JEA for at least 30 years.

Previously, an engineer was entitled to a JD 120 monthly pension.

The JEA special division in charge of the pension fund had approved the amendment.

Princess Rahma stresses communication to ensure humanitarian world order

AMMAN — On behalf of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan delivered an address in which she noted that the depth of the debate at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna last June, made it clear that a midway path (between the North-South divide) must be found if human rights are to develop into a viable foundation for global justice.



The Princess was speaking before a group of several thousand youngsters gathered in the Italian city of Rimini last Wednesday in a "Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples."

In the address, Princess Rahma stressed that it is the communication and cooperation borne of a meeting as that at Rimini that must be the cornerstone of an approach to ensure that the "New World Order" is essentially humanitarian in content.

"We are brought together by a dream that I am sure we all share: a dream of a world with no war, no more avoidable suffering. A world in which the victims of today's violence and oppression can rise, clothed in dignity, to play their part in the human enterprise of tomorrow," Princess Rahma told the gathering.

The Meeting for Friendship is a gathering which, every summer, transforms Rimini into a capital of culture.

For the week between Aug. 21 and 28, conferences, live shows, study seminars and testimonies on major and topical themes are staged.

The meeting's prestigious exhibitions have won national acclaim and remain open to the public for several months of the year, such as "The Cities of the Gods" in 1992 and this year's "The Euphrates and Time," and exhibition on the first civilisation in the lands of the Middle East.



JORDAN YELLOW PAGES RELEASED: His Royal Highness Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein Saturday attends a reception at the Marriott Hotel on the occasion of the release of the first issue of the Jordan Yellow Pages. The directory, which includes the telephone numbers and addresses of around 12,000 Jordanian economic institutions and companies, is a product of the Hashemite Advertising and Publishing Company in cooperation with Tele Direct Canada, Canada's largest telecommunications company. Canadian Ambassador in Jordan Andrew Robinson expressed hope that the directory will contribute to enhancing trade and communication businesses in the Kingdom.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan, Slovenia establish diplomatic ties

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday announced that Jordan was establishing diplomatic relations with the Republic of Slovenia at the ambassadorial level. It said that Jordan's Ambassador to Italy Hassan Abu Ne'meh was authorised to sign an agreement with the government of Slovenia on the establishment of diplomatic ties, noting that the envoy to Slovenia will be a non-resident ambassador.

Ministry to offer guidance to prisoners

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Social Development Saturday announced plans to open social services offices inside the prisons of Jordan. It said that the project, to be implemented in cooperation with the Public Security Department (PSD), would benefit the inmates by providing them with advice and guidance, noting that the offices would also follow up on inmates' cases with the courts and the provincial governors and would give special attention to juvenile delinquents.

Mayor calls for cultural meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi has issued a call to various cultural and artistic groups to meet at the Municipality on Wednesday to discuss prospects for stimulating cultural life in Amman.

Teachers to produce educational kits

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Curricula Technical Education Saturday opened a workshop to train teachers in producing educational kits for the primary and basic education schools. The workshop, organised in cooperation with the Amman office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will last two months and will enable teachers of geography and science to produce the necessary kits for their students.

Phosphate firm to hold workshop

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Saturday announced that it would organise a workshop here on Sunday on the specifications and maintenance of conveyor belts. It said that engineers and technicians from the phosphate, cement and potash companies would take part in the workshop.

King directs government to reconstruct Al Aqsa minbar

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday instructed the government to take the necessary steps to reconstruct the Saladdin minbar (a stepped platform for preaching) within Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

The ancient minbar of the holy shrine was brought from Aleppo to Jerusalem by the Muslim leader Saladdin, who liberated the city from the Crusaders in 1187 A.D.

"I instruct the government from this moment to direct the Ministry of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs and the Jordanian committee entrusted with the restoration of Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock to take all the necessary measures for the reconstruction of the minbar in its original form," said the King in his message to the prime minister.

"We want the minbar to retain its original shape and value and help revive its historic role as a forum for calling on the faithful to close ranks and unite their efforts to confront invaders and to rid the nation of the elements of weakness," said the King.

"I hereby instruct you to direct the attention of the committee to the restoration of the holy shrine and to include the reconstruction

of the minbar in the plans under way for the restoration of the Dome of the Rock," the King continued.

"We direct this committee to take all the appropriate and necessary steps and to recruit the required number of technicians and skilled architects for the project until it regains its original form and status, regardless of the cost," King Hussein continued.

Noting that the reconstruction and the refurbishing of the holy shrines was his religious duty, King Hussein said, "We are determined to safeguard the holy shrines and the Islamic heritage which includes the Saladdin minbar that withstood the elements of age for centuries. And we are determined that the minbar should regain its original form reflecting its beauty and its perfection."

The King said that he was undertaking this mission in response to Jordanian historic and cultural responsibilities and in respect for the national heritage and reaffirmation of the nation's history and future.

Work is under way at the restoration of the Dome of the Rock, to which King Hussein has donated \$8.24 million. Mivan, the Irish construction firm, which

signed a contract with the Ministry of Awaqaf in 1992, is currently conducting work on the dome of the shrine. The company is to cover the dome with gold-gilded copper sheets supported by lead, restore the roof and install an early warning system against fires.

In reply to the King's message, the prime minister said that he was responding with appreciation to the Royal directives and has already instructed the minister of Awaqaf to take steps towards the reconstruction of the ancient minbar.

"Your keenness to safeguard Jerusalem and its holy shrines is a well-known fact and your sacrifice for the holy city and the Islamic heritage is recognised throughout the Islamic world," said Dr. Majali in his reply.

He said the Hashemite family offered huge sacrifices to protect the holy places throughout history.

Dr. Majali added that coinciding with the Prophet Mohammad's birthday, which falls on Monday, the government was taking measures to start reconstructing the Saladdin minbar.

In an interview Saturday evening on Jordan Television, Ra'ef Nijm, deputy head of the Jordanian

nian Committee for the Restoration of the Holy Shrines, said the minbar was constructed 800 years ago by Muslim leader Nureddin Zinki in Aleppo.

It was not until Saladdin Ayyoubi liberated Beit Al Maqdes in 1187 that the minbar was brought to Jerusalem from Halwiyeh in Aleppo and remained there until an Australian, Dennis Rohan set fire to the mosque on Aug. 21, 1969.

Two years later, reconstruction began on the minbar, considered unique in design and fabrication. It is composed of small pieces of wood, without the use of any other material, and is covered by writings in ivory. The minbar, said Mr. Nijm, can be considered a masterpiece that is expected to last for hundreds and thousands of years because it is resistant to decay.

"We have collected its 40 plans and the needed material that resembles those initially used, and we are ready to implement the project. The period needed to rebuild the minbar is two years and will cost around \$3 million," Mr. Nijm said.

"Reconstructing this minbar and putting it back in its place means that we have regained the meaning of victory," he added.



The minbar of Al Aqsa Mosque was destroyed in 1969 (file photo)

Trade minister heads for Damascus for talks with Syrian counterpart

Manufacturers to display goods in Syria, Poland

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket Saturday left Amman for Damascus to start a three-day visit which will include talks with the Syrian Minister of Foreign Trade and Economy Mohammad Imadi.

Dr. Saket was also scheduled to attend the opening of the Damascus International Fair Saturday evening and chair a meeting by the general assembly of the Jordan-Syria Industry Company to discuss the firm's projects and future plans.

The Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCCO) has arranged for 76 Jordanian firms to take part in the fair by displaying samples of their manufactured products.

Dr. Saket is accompanied on the Syrian visit by JEDCO Director Mohammad Bani Hani and two other senior officials from his ministry.

Meanwhile, a group of Jordanian businessmen and exporters are due to leave for Warsaw Sunday to attend the opening of the first Jordanian Industrial Fair.

The Jordan Trade Association (JTA), which organised the fair, said it will run from August 31 until Sept. 4.

A large number of Jordanian industrial firms will display samples of their manufactured goods

in Warsaw. These include paint, gas ranges, shampoos, soap and detergents, biscuits, car batteries, garments, food stuffs, syringes, perambulators, umbrellas, plastic pipes used in construction, carpets, aluminum ladders, Dead Sea salts, tissue paper and stationery, kitchen utensils, furniture and car filters.

Jordan and Poland signed a trade agreement in 1977, but the balance is in Poland's favour and the JTA hopes Jordanian firms will open markets in Poland and help adjust the level of exchange.

According to JTA sources, Poland's markets look promising for Jordanian goods.



Bassam Al Saket

JSCEP to host seminar in Irbid

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Irbid Branch of the Jordanian Society for the Control of Environmental Pollution (JSCEP), in cooperation with the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation, will conduct a seminar entitled "Environmental and Community Matters in Irbid Governorate," on Sept. 7, at Yarmouk University.

The seminar aims at activating the branch's role in serving the local community, said a JSCEP statement Saturday.

In addition, it will focus on local environmental issues related to Irbid Governorate with the aim of providing proper dialogue and offering proper practical solutions.

The seminar will tackle the issues of industry, rodents, the effect of environmental pollution on children, roads' safety and its connection to environment, water contamination, and the role of education.

More than 70 participants representing public and private sectors, JSCEP Irbid branch members as well as Yarmouk University staff and interested citizens are expected to attend.

Arabs to go to 11th round

(Continued from page 1)

425. The Arab resolution also called for Israel to stop settlers from setting up colonies in the occupied territories and particularly Jerusalem in order to "create a climate allowing for the success of negotiations."

The document included a declaration of support for the anti-Israeli resistance in Lebanon and the occupied territories and called for the release of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails.

It condemned Israel's blitz last month on South Lebanon and hit out at what they said were Israeli statements incompatible with the peace process.

The minister demanded that Israel, to prepare the ground for the success of the talks, end attacks on Lebanon, free all Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners and allow the immediate return of nearly 400 Palestinians expelled to Lebanon last year.



The Arabian horse is the earliest improved breed of horse, valued for its speed, stamina, beauty, intelligence and gentleness (file photo)

Arabian horse festival to begin next month

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein Saturday announced that a five-day Arabian Horse Festival will be organised in Jordan next month with the participation of seven countries in addition to Jordan.

The festival, the fourth of its kind to be held in the Kingdom, is to be held at the Royal Stables in Al Hummar beginning Sept. 20, Princess Alia said.

She said a contest will be held in Sept. 22 and 23, and the winning horses will be eligible to take part in future European horse festivals.

At the same time, the royal stables will organise on Sept. 20 and 21 a training course for umpires to enable them to take

part in international contests. During the festival, a general art exhibition of paintings of horses and a training course for veterinarians specialising in the treatment of horses will be organised at the Royal Stud, Princess Alia noted.

Countries participating in the coming festival, said the Princess, are Qatar, Egypt, Syria, Oman, Iraq, Britain and the U.S. in addition to Jordan.

She said there will be several horse parades during the festival adding that the event will be open to the public.

Princess Alia is president of the Arabian Horse Organisation and chairwoman of the Royal Jordanian Horse Breeders Society.

Laith Shbeilat quits politics

(Continued from page 1)

ple's Democratic Party Tayseer Zibri, whose group also opposed the new provisional election law, said: "We also have many reservations on events in the country, but we cannot abandon the political arena for the enemies of democracy. I hope Shbeilat's decision is a summer cloud, we hope for his return."

Despite wide-spread support for Mr. Shbeilat's ideas and principles, a political figure said: "There is no idealism in politics. It is a down-to-earth process; and idealists usually are forgotten. We hope this would make Shbeilat retract his decision."

PLO is still in crisis talks

(Continued from page 1)

Israel Radio said on Saturday that Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres had flown to California to brief U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on the interim self-rule plan.

The second session, which broke up at 3 a.m. (0200 GMT) Saturday, included a thorough examination of the Gaza-Jericho autonomy proposal, Mr. Khalid said.

"Most of the brothers who talked in last night's session were against the proposal. They believe it's useless and should be withdrawn," said Mr. Khalid.

"I think Arafat believes that the project will solve his own problems... and he is determined to go on with it," Mr. Khalid said.

Despite the problems, another PLO official who spoke on condition of anonymity said the 6 1/2 hour session was conducted in "a relatively quiet atmosphere."

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Shaker Al Shadi at Alla Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by 25 Jordanian artists at the Housing Bank Complex exhibition hall.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Eshbela Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre.
- ★ Opening of new art gallery, "Darat Al Funun," of the Abdul Majed Shoman Foundation. Programme includes the permanent exhibition and the "Chair" exhibition in Jabal Luveldah.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Reflections and Colours" by artist Zeinab Abbas Mahdi at the Royal Cultural Centre.

FILMS

- ★ Film entitled "Escape to Witch Mountain" at the American Centre at 6:00 p.m.

SHOWS

- ★ "The Eternal Torch," a variety of Circassian dance performances by Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Club at the club's premises in the Seventh Circle.

SEMINARS

- ★ Seminars entitled "Newspaper Articles and the Citizen's Concerns" by Sultan Hattab and Jihad Jbarah at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:30 p.m.

Dead woman reported electrocuted

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 30-year-old woman was found dead in her bedroom at Taybeh town, south of Amman. Police believe she was electrocuted, according to a report in Al Dustour Arabic daily Saturday.

The paper, which identified the woman as Y.M.G., said that relatives calling at the woman's home had found the body and reported the matter to police.

Initial investigations into the case were said to reveal that the woman's hands were tied to her bed and electric wires were attached to her body, which indicated that an electric shock had caused her death, the paper said.

Al Dustour also reported that a 33-year-old man, identified by the police as M.A.N. from Jabal Hussein, had committed suicide last week.

The report said the man was said to have injected himself with a poisonous pesticide while in his office near a residential area.

Jordan Times

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Water beyond reach

IS JORDAN waiting for a miracle to happen, like the success of the peace process, to resolve the growing national water problem that we now face?

Jordan can indeed pin hope on the eventual success of the negotiations to contribute to the solution of the chronic water problem, but we cannot afford to sit idle by until that happens. Even though water resources in the country are limited under the present circumstances there is still a great deal that can be done right away to alleviate the hardships that Jordanians suffer almost daily from water shortages. Our water authorities have, for example, been saying for years that water losses from rusty water networks reach the phenomenal rate of 50 per cent. If this is one of the prime problems, why then have we waited for so long to do something about it? It would seem sensible to allocate all the necessary funds for the plugging of this loophole, no matter how high the bill is. This priority investment in the water system makes good sense even from a strictly economic point of view. The national savings that can be realised make it worth the trouble.

There are other remedial measures that can be put to practice immediately to decrease the problem if not to solve it altogether. But all such solutions, including the construction of new dams or private cisterns, would not begin to even scratch the surface of the crisis unless there is a more even distribution of people in the Kingdom. The rate at which the capital is growing, for example, would make all available solutions fall short of objective even if and when there is peace in the area.

True, we do not live in a police state and freedom of movement and choice of residence are constitutionally enshrined rights. Still, there must be in place an approved policy to lessen the burdens on key cities like Amman and Zarqa. This calls for the cooperation of the people themselves who may be encouraged through social and economic incentives to make a more balanced choice of where to build their homes and construct their businesses. The central issue, though, remains the size of the population of the country. There is obviously a limit to the capacity of Jordan in absorbing more people, whether immigrants or new borns. No amount of pure nationalist or religious feelings would be a rational or sufficient justification for letting the country break at the seams. There must be a national population policy that would determine the extent of population growth which the natural resources of Jordan can tolerate.

The next Parliament should open the door for a serious debate on this issue. Meanwhile, the government should begin to formulate guidelines for the required population policy even while we remain engaged in peace talks with Israel. We should put our own house in order before we affix stamp to any agreements regarding the whole future of the area.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

SAWT AL SHAAB daily Saturday discussed the outcome of the Arab foreign ministers' talks in Beirut Friday, describing the meeting as a manifestation of solidarity with Lebanon in the face of Israel's recurrent acts of aggression. There is no doubt that the Beirut meeting was also a chance for the Arab foreign ministers to reaffirm their united stand and close ranks in connection with the coming Washington meetings with the Israeli side to discuss prospects for peace in the Middle East, said the paper. Coming in the wake of Palestine president's talks with King Hussein in Amman, the Beirut meeting is considered another stage of genuine Arab efforts to maintain cohesion within their ranks in the face of Israel's manoeuvres with regard to the occupied Arab lands in general and Jerusalem in particular, said the paper. Jerusalem is not for the Palestinians alone but rather for all Arabs, Muslims and Christians alike, and there is need for all Arab parties to the Middle East peace process to cling to the Arab Nation's right and demand for sovereignty over the Arab city, demanded the paper. There is no alternative to supporting the Palestinian side at the talks in demanding the full rights of the Palestinian people not only in Gaza and West Bank but also in Jerusalem, added the daily. It said that the return of Gaza, Jericho or other parts of the occupied lands as a first stage should not divert the Arab Nation's attention from continued efforts to regain the Arab city of Jerusalem as it is, an integral part of the occupied Arab territories.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i said that the Arab are not united in their stand and lack genuine coordination vis-a-vis the U.S. Israeli alliance. Tareq Masarweh said that a major indication of this fact is Jordan's total surprise at the Palestinian-Israeli agreement on the so-called Jericho and Gaza first proposal. Likewise, Damascus was surprised at the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south, said the writer. It seems that the Americans and the Israelis are intent on keeping the Arab parties in disarray to facilitate partial solutions. He said the alliance is intent on separating the Palestinians living inside the occupied lands from those in the diaspora and is keen on separating Lebanon and Syria. Washington is determined to force Syria to pull out its forces from Lebanon and to integrate the so-called south Lebanese army in the Lebanese armed forces as part of the arrangement this alliance wants to see in this region. At the same time, said the writer, the Palestinians are prevented from operating from South Lebanon. It is regrettable to see Syria's cool relations with Jordan and the uneasy relationship between Syria and the PLO, something which works in favour of the U.S.-Israeli alliance too, added the writer. He said that despite the Beirut meeting Friday, and despite the reaffirmation of the closed Arab ranks vis-a-vis Israel, the Arabs remain as far apart as ever, and together they face a gloomy future.



Diplomats' departures show low morale over Bosnia

By Deborah Zabarenko
Reuters

WASHINGTON — A rash of U.S. State Department resignations points up a crisis of morale over Bosnia, typified by the latest dissident's view that the Clinton administration sees Bosnia as a mere "distraction" from domestic issues.

"It appears to me...that the policy-makers want this problem to go away, that President (Bill) Clinton feels he was elected to focus on domestic issues and Bosnia is a distraction," former Croatia Desk Officer Stephen Walker said Tuesday, one day after he resigned.

"I believe that frustration is widespread within the department and there is...approaching a consensus that our policy is misguided and that we should be doing more," Mr. Walker told Reuters by telephone.

As the third low-level diplomat to quit in less than a month, Mr. Walker felt he was acting on opinions shared — but not always expressed — in the offices and corridors of the State Department.

For him, the last straw was U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's statement in late July that Washington was doing all it could in Bosnia within the constraints of national security, a statement that Mr. Walker said showed the international community had "given up on Bosnia."

In fact, Mr. Christopher was cognisant enough of grumbling within the ranks to call a meeting of several dozen employees earlier this month to air differences on U.S. policy in the former Yugoslavia.

The United States and Europe have appeared powerless to moderate a brutal civil war in which Bosnian Muslims have suffered especially grievously — including civilians racked by malnutrition, disease and untended war wounds in besieged cities — under a campaign pressed by Bosnian Serbs.

Department spokesman Mike McCurry has been at pains to note that even the secretary of state empathises with those at the lower levels when it comes to a problem like Bosnia.

Asked what Mr. Walker's resignation signified, Mr. McCurry said: "I think it tells you what

the secretary himself has said on numerous occasions: this is a frustrating, terrible, problem in which answers are not easy to come by."

But however sympathetic they may be to the dissenters, Mr. Christopher and others at the top are unlikely to change policy based on several low-level resignations, according to one former State Department officer.

"The job of low-level bureaucrats is to focus on particular issues...to make the best recommendation they can to the president regarding U.S. national interest...But that's not the end of the story," said George Mitchell, now a professor at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

"The end of the story is written at the White House where they combine international and domestic concerns in conjunction with the Congress," he said.

Sometimes, Mr. Mitchell said, desk-level officers can lose perspective and become out of touch with the overall thrust of U.S. policy. He also noted that repeated opinion polls show scant concern for Bosnia among the American public and little enthusiasm for any major U.S. military involvement there.

"We live in a post-Vietnam political climate in this country...which means domestic priorities have finally come to the fore and should not be sacrificed except to the most extreme international threats," Mr. Mitchell said.

He rejected any comparison between the Bosnia policy resignations — four in a year — to internal U.S. government dissent during the Vietnam war era, saying disagreement over Bosnia is concentrated in one office of the State Department while dissent over U.S.-Vietnam policy was widespread.

At 30, after eight years as a foreign service officer and only two months with the State Department's Balkan conflict group, Mr. Walker said he had no new job lined up but still felt resignation was his only course in the face of U.S. policy.

"There have been policies before that I disagreed with, quite strongly, but this is the one case where the situation was so grave, the stakes so high and the likelihood of policy change so low that I had no choice but to resign," he said.

Haiti — example of successful use of sanctions

By Anthony Goodman
Reuters

UNITED NATIONS — A U.N. Security Council decision suspending sanctions against Haiti has capped a rare, successful use of the council's ultimate economic weapon.

The suspension, approved on Friday, came little more than two months after an oil, arms and financial embargo was slapped on the Caribbean nation to force the reinstatement of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, overthrown in a September 1991 military coup.

Under an agreement between Mr. Aristide and Haitian military chief Lieutenant-General Raoul Cedras, signed in New York on July 3, the exiled president will return home on Oct. 30.

The Haitian parliament's confirmation this week of businessman Robert Malval as Mr. Aristide's prime minister cleared the way for the sanctions to be suspended.

But the council retained the option of reimposing the sanctions if the New York agreement is breached. They will be definitively lifted when all provisions of the accord have been implemented.

The case of Haiti marks a classic use of sanctions virtually unprecedented in U.N. history. They were voted on June 16 and went into force on June 23, after a one-week grace period.

Not only do they appear to have achieved everything the Security Council intended, but did

so in record time — unlike other uses of the punitive weapon.

The first application of sanctions under the mandatory provisions of Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter was against the then-breakaway British colony of Rhodesia.

A series of increasingly harsh measures imposed between 1966 and 1977 lapsed only after Rhodesia became the independent African-ruled nation of Zimbabwe in 1980.

The next U.N. use of sanctions was in 1977, when the Security Council enacted a mandatory arms embargo — still in force — against South Africa because of its racial policies and incursions into neighbouring African countries.

In the cases of Rhodesia and South Africa, the sanctions were neither quick-acting nor particularly effective.

This contrasts sharply with Haiti, already impoverished when the oil ban and other measures went into force, bringing the country to a virtual standstill within weeks.

In recent years, the Security Council has resorted to sanctions of varying severity in reaction to a string of crises.

They ranged from Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait to the strife in former Yugoslavia and from Libya's refusal to surrender suspects in the 1988 bombing of an airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland to the outbreak of factional warfare in Somalia.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Human development in Jordan

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

ACCORDING TO the tables presented in the World Human Development Report (1993), issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the per capita gross national product (GNP) in Jordan was estimated at \$1,640, which places Jordan in a respectable place among nations. Two thirds of human beings are poorer than we are, while one third of mankind is probably much richer. Our place on an accelerating scale of 100 in per capita stands at the point of 66.6.

The poorest people in the world are the Mozambique people, and the richest are the Swiss. Among the Arab countries, the people of Somalia are at the bottom of the list, with an average of \$170 per capita, and the people of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are at the top, with an average annual income of \$18,430 per capita. Thus, the income of an average UAE national equals the income of 108 Somali citizens or 11 Jordanians.

However, the per capita income is but one factor in the human development. The international human development index gave the other following indicators for Jordan:

Among the 160 countries covered by the report, Jordan is in the 86th position. Average life expectancy at birth is 66.9 years. The percentage of adults who are able to read and write is 80.1 per cent. The average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita after adjustment for purchasing power parity (PPP) is \$2,415 and the overall index of human development in Jordan is 58.6 per cent.

The report states that 97 per cent of the Jordanian population has access to medical services, 99 per cent has drinkable water, and the average Jordanian consumes food enough to give him or her 118 per cent of the calories required. The purchasing power of money in Jordan is 47.3 per cent higher than the world average; therefore, the per capita income of \$1,640 is actually equivalent to \$2,415 because the price level of goods and services in Jordan is lower than the worldwide level by 32.1 per cent.

Comparing Jordan's human situation in 1990 to what it used to be 30 years ago, the report concluded that the average life of the Jordanian increased by 42.6 per cent, infant mortality rate declined by 76 per cent, the food calories intake rose by 26.9 per cent and the per capita income rate by 115.6 per cent in real terms i.e., after allowing for inflation, an improvement of 2.6 per annum.

If we compare Jordan's human state of affairs with that of the industrialised countries of the North, we find that the average Jordanian has 90 per cent of life expectancy, 88 per cent of the nutritional calories, 82 per cent of education, 16 per cent of the gross domestic product, 12 per cent of gross national product, 50 per cent of the educational years, 11 per cent of the nurses per one thousand of population, 33 per cent of family planning, 37 per

cent of contraceptives, 40 per cent of medical doctors and 16 per cent of the newspaper circulation relative to population. The report estimated that each 1,000 Jordanians (or 150 families) own 252 radios, 77 television sets, and buy 53 copies of daily newspapers.

The population under the line of poverty is estimated at 17 per cent, the ratio of public expenditure on education is 5.9 per cent and on public health 2.7 per cent. The foreign aid received by Jordan amounts to 16.7 per cent of GNP (1990), which put Jordan in the sixth highest place as far indebtedness is concerned in the first if you exclude African debtor countries.

"Comparing Jordan's human situation in 1990 to what it used to be 30 years ago, the report concluded that the average life of the Jordanians increased by 42.6 per cent, infant mortality rate declined by 76 per cent, the food calories intake rose by 26.9 per cent and the per capita income rate by 115.6 per cent in real terms i.e., after allowing for inflation, an improvement of 2.6 per annum."

The report found that there are 2.1 soldiers for each teacher, or 26 soldiers for each physician. Taxes take 15.3 per cent of GNP (1989) and direct taxes make 13.4 per cent of total taxes.

This in sum is the state of affairs of human development in Jordan. In this respect, Jordan ranks as number one among Arab countries not producing oil but ranks as number 10 among all Arab countries.

Of course there is large room for improvement and further development. It is not good enough to say that Jordan today is far better than it used to be several decades ago. This should not be taken for granted, the comparison must be made with other countries which improved also, some of them faster than we did.

The United Nations annual report on the state of all countries of the world regarding human development will work as an effective incentive to speed up the race for a better life for the people.

Kuwait uses counselling to tackle Gulf war trauma

By William MacClean
Reuters

KUWAIT — When Kuwait started psychological counselling for people traumatised by the Gulf war, some thought conservative tradition might stop sufferers seeking treatment.

The result was surprising. "We are overloaded," said Basim Al Rashidi, who runs the government-funded service known as the Social Development Office.

"We found many people who accept it. It was astonishing to have such a number," he told Reuters.

He said hundreds of people have attended the office's five clinics since the project was started in April 1992 on the direct order of the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah.

Its managers say it is the first such state-funded service in the Gulf and perhaps in the Middle East.

Victims of torture and rape during Iraq's seven month occupation are among those who have made use of the free confidential service which includes individual and group therapy from 14 Kuwaiti counsellors with doctorates in psychology.

Mr. Rashidi said a U.S. study for the office said Kuwait would need such a counselling service for the next 45 years.

Sociologist Fahad Al Nasser said the service was considering opening a telephone advice "hotline" next year.

It will not be easy to heal the emotional scars of Iraq's 1990 invasion, which shattered the easy calm of a country long seen by its inhabitants as an oasis of peace in a troubled region.

Kuwait lacks previous experience of modern warfare and its psychological after-effects. Strong family ties provide support but can also create a stigma about professional counselling.

"Psychological difficulties are thought of as private issues. People don't want strangers involved," said Mr. Nasser. Mr. Rashidi said that people were willing to attend only if the counsellor was known in society as a person of integrity.

Experts say the effects of what they call post-traumatic stress disorder range from conditions among children such as bed-wetting, insomnia and nightmares to delinquency, divorce, and crime among teenagers and adults victims of torture or rape.

By treating individuals, the office aims to shore up social stability and parental authority affected by war.

"We have three goals," said Mr. Rashidi. "To find the affected individuals and any negative trends in society, to treat affected individuals and finally to rehabilitate these people."

Mr. Rashidi is still haunted by his own experience of being held for two months in an Iraqi prison during the crisis.

"My heart within was killed. My image of myself was killed," he said. "I was slapped and beaten and told I would be executed."

Many of the people he counsels suffered much worse.

A report published after the war by the office of the judge advocate general of the U.S. army quoted survivors as saying torture had taken place in at least 24 Kuwait city sites during the occupation, mostly police stations or sports facilities.

The report said torture was "by amputation or injury to various body parts, including limbs, eyes, tongues, ears, noses, lips and genitals. Electric drills were used to penetrate the chest, legs or arms. Some victims were killed in acid baths."

More than 300 Kuwaitis were killed during the occupation and up to 600 are still missing and believed, despite Iraqi denials, to be held north of the border.

Up to 6,000 Kuwaitis arrested during the occupation spent time in detention in Iraq before being released after the war.

Mr. Nasser said: "We have cases of women raped by the Iraqis, we have fathers who saw their sons executed, we have one father who saw in front of him his son's hands being cut off."

"A child who lost his father can lose control: The mother cannot play the father's role and we have to teach her how."

Mr. Rashidi, on sabbatical leave from the chairmanship of the Educational Psychology Department at Kuwait University, said some army personnel regularly attended the office's clinics.

"We have many army people who were caught at the start of the invasion and did not have the chance to fight. They say 'I was paid to fight. I was trained for 15 years for this moment and I was not given a chance.' They are jealous of friends who were killed in the war."

"Then you will get a son who says 'I hate my mother because she did not let my father escape from the country, so he ended up being killed by the Iraqis'. The mother is so proud of the sacrifice of her dead husband, but she cannot communicate this to her children. We have hundreds of families like these."

Mr. Nasser said no stigma should be attached to therapy. "Let the individual who comes for counselling be proud of himself. Our argument is that most people accept such counselling in their legal, religious and political affairs, and it is only appropriate to provide this also in psychological matters."

Rape is a sensitive subject in this conservative society.

Mr. Nasser said: "The lesson we try to teach is that you are not to blame. You paid the price for your country. You are an honoured woman. Some women are rehabilitated and some even have married."

LETTERS

Who comes first?

To the Editor:

Regarding the letter about the mangling of a horse (Jordan Times, Aug. 25, 1993) I would like to say that although I sympathise with the horse and I am very sorry that it had to endure such misery, I still believe that before we create a system "which can deal quickly and effectively with a situation of this type" we should occupy ourselves with systems that would deal with miseries and poverty of citizens all over the country. I am very sorry that our country is not 'animal friendly', but don't you think officials should regard human beings first, before helping animals?

Eliane Abdel Malek,
Amman.



The Abdoan mangled horse moments before it was destroyed

Unprepared for suffering animals

To the Editor:

The letter about the horse which was callously attacked and dumped with horrific injuries (Jordan Times, Aug. 25, 1993), does indeed highlight the need for a system which can deal quickly and effectively with similar situations. In England, the police would call immediately for a vet or an animal welfare representative to destroy a horse such as this, or a police marksman would shoot it, and then arrange for the collection of the carcass.

The Greater Amman Municipality tells us we must have a truck on the spot when we have to destroy an animal, but in numerous cases we have had great difficulty in summoning a truck there and then. This means the animal would have to suffer more.

In this particular case, the horse was destroyed anyway at 6:15 p.m., and when the Jordanian Society for the Protection of Animals (JSPA) went to get a truck the next morning, none came in spite of promises, until our people paid a second visit three hours later and followed a truck there. If the municipality wishes to make an animal suffer for a day or two, until they or others decide municipality, before destroying animals, to have a truck there, but sometimes there is a delay.

One regularly sees dead dogs on the side of roads, which no one animals must not be allowed to suffer because of this. Injuries must be put out of their misery and trucks should be available at all times to cope with emergencies.

Incidentally, this case was most strange as nobody saw the culprits and nobody has any idea of where it came from. One wonders if it was dumped in the residential area of Abdoan so that someone would see it and deal with it.

Miss Chris Larter,
Publicity Officer for the
Jordanian Society for the
Protection of Animals,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

So 'cheap' an adventure

By Robert Gordon-Walker

WE WAIT on a path in the Hinku Valley as another weather-battered group creeps towards us from Mera, one of Nepal's about 6,000m trekking mountains. Their strained, peeling faces contrast with their porters' clear complexions and bored expressions. One scabby Lancastrian in hi-tech gear gasps through wind-cracked lips. "It's amazing. But now I'm shattered. I'm emotionally and physically drained."

Another mumbles that he will be back to "conquer it" next time, while 20 over-burdened under-clad porters rush past, anxious that nothing should interrupt their journey home to the comfort of a wood fire.

It is just as well they hurried away, as they might not have cared for the parting words of one of our number — who had now replaced his ice-axe with a prayer wheel — even though the words had been carefully translated from his dog-eared Nepali dictionary. "They have to learn," he said. "They can't keep chopping down trees."

His remarks epitomised one of the chief ambiguities in what has come to be known as "sustainable tourism" — tourism that, according to its proponents, should do minimal harm to the environment and tries to put something back.

The campaign for "sustainable tourism" is a branch that sprouted from the 1987 report of the U.N.-sponsored World Commission on Environment and Development. The report, Our Common Future, extends the most recent hand-hold for those who feel fear and loathing for the "plague wind" of industrialisation.

Organisations like Tourism Concern, founded in 1988, are in the vanguard of a movement that derides so-called "eco-tourism" — tourism to wilderness areas — as a marketing gimmick used by travel companies to attract Third World voyagers who probably drive to their nearest bottle-bank.

"Sustainable tourism," which aspires to put something back into underdeveloped countries, appears to be having little effect. While World Tourist Organisation figures show a 17 per cent shift towards the Third World as the holiday-maker's preferred destination between 1980-89, this increase has not had the predicted effect. If you ignore unquantifiable "trickle-down" benefits the Third World's share of receipts from tourism has actually fallen by 4 per cent. This paradox is explained by a feature of such tourism that is depressing evident to anyone who has endured the boast of the emaciated backpacker staying in the cheapest hovel in Zaire, or the affronted white of the professional on sabbatical when "overcharged" for a taxi trip to the Giza pyramids that costs less than his Tube fare to work. You cannot help suspecting that the campaign for "sustainable tourism" is little more than a rationalised desire to keep the Third World a cheap place to visit.

It is an inescapable fact that the notion of "sustainable tourism" is riddled with internal conflicts. Its adherents tend to assume that the interests of the local communities coincide with their own desire to preserve such regions, whereas the local communities might actually prefer their national government's development schemes. It also tends to forget that by trying to preserve the colourful backwardness that supports their image of primitive arcadia, it may also be maintaining hideous levels of poverty and deep social injustices. In other words, "sustainable tourism" may fail to make either an economic or a moral contribution to the regions it says it wants to help.

In a paper commissioned by the World Wide Fund for Nature called Beyond the Green Horizon (1992), Tourism Concern pleads for what we all yearn for when faced with wear and tear on our favourite landscape: the preservation of the status quo through restraint and positive conservation policies. It also insists that local people must determine whether their own backyard should receive visitors at all, and then reap the economic benefits if they do.

Both are laudable aims. But perhaps the key to the discomfort felt by the campaign for "sustainable tourism" lies in the pretence that when we travel to the Third World we are not tourists at all. We feel we are seeking to discover something new in the wilderness, and so the slogan becomes the angry wail of the insecure, self-flagellant, disappointed that he has explored along a beaten path.

"I am keeping a journal; maybe I can make it into a book," says one traveller to me as we sit in a bar in a small village

what happens when the economic return accrues at the cost of Conrad's "heart of darkness" or Tintin's Tibetan idyll? We need to know that such places are there even if we cannot visit them. One answer is to find a small tribe that has hunted in a large area for years, tell the world it is near to extinction and then send in the television cameras. The governor of Brazil's Amazonas state, Gilberto Mestrinho, had a different solution: attack ecologists and anthropologists as lackeys of imperialist mineral producers, and then launch plans for an Eco-Disneyland in the jungle.

Perhaps these problems will be discussed when the "Second World Congress on Tourism for the Environment" meets at the Hilton on the Venezuelan island of Margarita. After digesting prolix papers in the tropical sunshine, assorted scientists and delegates from non-governmental organisations will reconvene on the mainland. The conference organisers, the Janaca Trust, hope the participants will find ways to: "Minimise negative environmental and cultural impacts while working to achieve authentic, intimate, meaningful and educational encounters (with) local natural and cultural phenomena."

They might also see a few sights, take some photographs and haggle for ethnic handicrafts. They can then go home more "experienced" than their inadequate but envious friends. In fact, of course, they will behave like tourists.

near Arusha, the centre of Tanzania's safari business. The happy disco chimes of "Jambo! Jambo!" from the radio pound the visitor's brain like a parody of a mantra, but the barman would prefer to say "goodbye" to this young traveller, who won't spend any money.

Encounter Overland truckers and lonely trekkers find that it is ennui, not danger, that confronts them in many exotic locations. In Peru, one of 12 countries the Foreign Office advises against visiting, travellers who are disappointed not to have captured a Sendero Luminoso flag raise their spirits with cheap pisco sour and swap stories about friends of friends who have been robbed. Quechua Indians can not only be admired for their spiritual purity and their "authentic" costumes, but also examined for their lacerous potential.

News reports of attacks on tourist buses in Egypt and bombs exploding in Bogota can glamorise a trip that could have been made to the local pub. But a journey to the Third World looks better on the CV, and if it is a long one, holds out the prospect of a job with a Third World "concerned" group when it is time to compromise in suburbia.

Resort complexes built by international corporations and enjoyed by fat-cat hedonists insensitive to the slums on the horizon of

their photographs deserve censure if the only benefit to the region is poorly paid work for a handful of cleaners. Yet the mind of the "sustainable tourism" activist is ambivalent on this, too. The left side appreciates the low impact on the environment, while the right side deprecates the crassness.

The alternative to preservation does not have to be sex tours to Manila, but nor should it be the creation of parks for western interest groups that designate indigenous communities as "guardians of nature and local customs." Let crystal-clutchers meditate on the Island of Sun on Lake Titicaca, let fogies in tweed scramble in the Karakoram against the grockel invasion of Gore-tex, and let businessmen

with Kerouacs in their pockets explore the barrios next to the Inter-Continental; but at least accept that an Untouchable in India can enjoy a Coke on a hot day.

Self-indulgence is not the least of the faults of the self-righteous. In Banos, Ecuador, a 25-year-old Australian globe-trekker, wearing a "Pizarro Go Home!" T-shirt beneath his Otavalo jumper, consults his "Lonely Planet" guide

book. He eats muesli in a bed-and-breakfast run by a young ex-advertising couple from London, while New Age music hums from the CD player.

He turns to a man who has recommended a cheap local guide for a jungle trip. "It says he kills animals."

"He has to, there aren't any cafes out there."

"I don't care. I'm not impressed." — The Independent.



A party of trekkers prepares to conquer the Himalayas; is their trip making any real contributions to the local economy?

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Secret talks

(Continued from page 1)

Israel and army radio indicated Mr. Peres was seeking American help in cementing the "Gaza-Jericho first" deal. One report said Mr. Peres was expected to report to the weekly cabinet session on Sunday.

The PLO was divided over the Gaza-Jericho plan. Chairman Yasser Arafat supports it but some colleagues object to signing an agreement before receiving guarantees they can achieve independent statehood in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israeli right-wingers also object, because of reports that the plan may involve an Israeli troop withdrawal in parts of Gaza or in Jericho.

The Likud Party accused Mr. Rabin of setting up a "PLO terrorist state" in the West Bank and Gaza. Likud lawmakers filed a motion of no confidence and demanded Mr. Rabin hold a national referendum before implementing an autonomy agreement.

Parliament also scheduled a special debate for Monday on the issue, interrupting the summer recess.

Israeli and Palestinian officials suggested Friday that agreement on the "Gaza-Jericho first" plan was imminent, and some reports on Friday and Saturday said general guidelines were already reached.

Labour Party lawmaker Efraim Sneh, who is close to Mr. Rabin, tried to tone down these expectations on Saturday. He said "I don't think any agreement is so close."

He suggested that security was a key issue left unresolved. Palestinians and radio reports suggested Israel had agreed to a troop pullback and to hand over internal security to Palestinian police.

Mr. Sneh said Israel would demand that "overall responsibility for security in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the interim period, remains in Israeli hands."

Police Minister Shalom Meislin, while the first Israeli to confirm, albeit half-heartedly, reports about Mr. Peres having met a PLO official.

He told Israel Radio he was "not confirming the meeting, but I don't think there's anything extraordinary here."

Israeli media have reported since Wednesday that Mr. Peres met an Arafat aide, either Mohammad Abbas or with Yasser Abed Rabbo, while in Scandinavia in the past week.

The purported meeting caps a series of recent behind-the-scenes contacts that have essentially eroded Israel's on-paper policy of boycotting the PLO.

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Analysts: Record-breaking London share rally has further to go

LONDON (R) — London's FTSE 100 index of blue chip shares raced to all-time highs Friday and share analysts said the record-breaking run has further to go as fierce demand for stocks shows no signs of abating.

The Financial Times-Stock Exchange (FTSE) 100 index of blue chip shares pushed through the 3,100 level for the first time, scoring a 21.4 point rise to close at 3,106.6, galvanised by a stronger index futures market and good news on manufacturing from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).

The FTSE 100 earlier hit a trading high of 3,103.7.

"A wall of money hits the market every day. We've got good news on recovery and no-one will sell stock," said one dealer.

The CBI said British manufacturing order books have improved to the best levels since

before the recession.

"It would take something very negative and totally unexpected to push this market down and hold it there," said Richard Jeffrey of Charterhouse Tilney.

"We're seeing increasing confirmation of recovery. The rally will continue," he added.

The FTSE 100 index had risen by around 250 points or nine per cent since end-1992 to its current level and is now just short of double the 1,565 closing level it hit at the low point of the 1987 market crash.

The prospect of a low-interest rate environment coupled with relatively strong economic growth in Britain and speedier than expected recovery from recession across continental Europe has sparked a wave of buying.

Analysts see no let-up in either domestic or overseas buying.

Trevor Laugharne, strategist at brokers Kleinwort Benson, said:

"It's difficult to find the icebergs and we have the best balance of positive forces that we'll see for five years."

Even disappointment that the Bundesbank did not cut German interest rates on Thursday failed to upset the market as investors took the view that an eventual cut is inevitable.

"The timing of a (German) cut matters much less than the fact that rates will be down by one point or more by the end of the year," said Mr. Jeffrey.

"We've seen very strong inflows of U.S. funds recently on a perception that the U.K. market offers better value than Wall Street. I see that continuing for at least six months," said strategist Mark Howdle of J.P. Morgan.

One key to the market's success has been the erosion of returns on cash held in building society and bank deposits. This has sparked an exodus of funds

into stockmarket investment vehicles like unit trusts.

"Unit trust sales still booming... five billion sterling worth has been sold in the first seven months of this year. It was a flat market until then," said Richard Kersley of Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

Although some market commentators have expressed concern that the ratio of share prices to company earnings is as high as before the autumn 1987 crash, many dismiss fears of a repeat.

Market bulls point to the fact company earnings, unlike in 1987, are set to recover from the low point of an economic cycle.

Also, the stock market rise has been matched by a surge in government bond prices, leaving the relationship between returns on owning stocks and the interest yield on bonds well within historic norms.

Wall Street loses record gains to profit-taking

NEW YORK (AFP) — The blue chip Dow Jones index climbed to a pair of record highs this week but profit-taking eroded most of the gains, a correction expected by traders who now predict another rise.

The index of 30 leading industrial stocks closed Friday at 3,640.63, up 7.55 points from last week.

The New York Stock Exchange was buoyed by the bond market's record lows on long-term rates.

The Bundesbank's decision not to lower key interest rates for now contributed to the continuing fall in U.S. rates. The move could slow European economic recovery and hence that of the United States, experts said.

Expectations of a slow but steady U.S. rebound allayed fears of inflation which also pushed down interest rates, they noted.

Dennis Jarrett, an analyst with Kidder Peabody, predicted profit-taking during the coming weeks on Wall Street would push blue chip prices below the 3,550 mark.

Selling on the bond market would also spark a brief rise in interest rates, Mr. Jarrett said.

But the analyst also said stock prices likely would take off again, climbing back up to 3,700 or 3,800 points by the end of the year, boosted primarily by continued low interest rates.

On the bond market, interest rates on 30-year treasury bonds dropped to 6.13 per cent Friday from 6.21 per cent last week. Rates dropped Thursday to their lowest level in 16 years, to 6.08 per cent.

German central bank increasingly concerned by market guesses

FRANKFURT (R) — The Bundesbank, often the butt of international criticism for its tough anti-inflationary policies, appears increasingly concerned by financial markets' attempts to second-guess its monetary decisions.

Bankers and central bank officials say the massive wave of predictions which precedes any meeting of the Bundesbank's central council often lead to distorted market reactions.

The Bundesbank regularly has to take the blame for those reactions when the markets are disappointed that their expectations have not been fulfilled.

Nevertheless, bankers in Frankfurt are certain that the independent and inflation-conscious central bank, while having to take market views into account, will not be swayed away from its primary task of maintaining price stability.

The most dramatic recent example of the Bundesbank's "disappointing" the markets was on July 29, when it failed to deliver a cut in the discount rate which money dealers believed was necessary to save the European monetary system (EMS).

The result of the Bundesbank's move only to trim its less important Lombard lending rate led to a flood of speculative selling of weaker currencies and the de facto dissolution of the system three days later — for which France initially blamed the German central bank.

Market players and economists were equally convinced the Bundesbank was going to trim its discount rate this week.

As the 16-strong Bundesbank council went into its meeting Thursday, it had available precise

estimates from the market gurus as to how much the discount rate would fall.

Markets were again wrong-footed when the central bank announced no change to credit policies at the end of the session, triggering a sell-off in the dollar on what players interpreted as a further signal of monetary rigour.

But just as quickly, predictions were coming in on when the next Bundesbank rate cut was likely.

The Bundesbank's chief spokesman Manfred Koerber told Reuters the Bundesbank could not allow its thinking to be directed by market expectations, as monetary policy was fundamentally based on longer term considerations.

"The Bundesbank views with concern the fact that expectations, which are heightened by apparently scientifically backed predictions, contribute to large market fluctuations and to volatility," Mr. Koerber said.

"This was especially true when the expectations were disappointed."

One commercial banker who closely watches the Bundesbank's deliberations said one specific problem in the wave of market speculation lay in fundamental cultural differences between German economic thinking and Anglo-Saxon oriented markets.

"There is a different philosophy," the banker said. The Bundesbank, especially, thought in a longer-term dimension.

Such distinctions were also true for German corporations which generally intensely dislike the sort of pressure put on their U.S. equivalents to come up with quarterly results which will satisfy their stockholders.

The commercial banker said his bank like others had to hold a position on what the Bundesbank

might do, but stressed that such forecasts were really only based on what was plausible.

This week's speculation had partly reflected and unusually close proximity of a key money market rate to the 6.75 per cent discount rate. "But to say the Bundesbank has to act in this position is simply an interpretation," the banker said.

He also said short-term thinking and individual positions were partly reflected in some predictions.

"We already saw in the early 1980s in the United States that markets were dominated by the difference between market expectations of U.S. money supply data and the actual outcome. The same situation is now developing in Germany and it is intolerable," the banker said.

Hung Tyan, chief executive of Deutsche Bank Research, said: "Market reactions are a factor which the Bundesbank as well as any central bank has to take into consideration when deciding policy."

But at the bottom line, the July 29 decision had shown markets that the Bundesbank's top priority was fighting inflation, Mr. Tyan said. Operators would possibly become more cautious about guessing what the central bank might do.

Bundesbank Director Otmar Issing made clear Friday that German interest rates were still headed lower. The only open question was when the central bank would see the next opportunity to relax monetary policy.

"In the current situation in west Germany, in the recession, the direction of monetary policy moves is pre-set. Open is when and at what time we take the relevant steps," Mr. Issing said in an interview with German television.

Russian deputies reject Yeltsin's budget plans

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's parliament Friday rejected President Boris Yeltsin's plan to cut the budget deficit, raising the spectre of an inflationary spiral and endangering new cash from the international Monetary Fund.

Parliament threw out all but six amendments proposed by Mr. Yeltsin and approved its own budget plan by 151 votes to three, more than the number needed to overrule a presidential veto.

But the vote changed the name of the budget law slightly and some deputies said this could give Mr. Yeltsin constitutional grounds to exercise his veto right again.

In an attempt to force the government's hand, parliament voted to give it one week to raise the funds for the legislature's spending plans. Government officials said they would simply ignore parliament's wishes.

Deputies, long hostile to Mr. Yeltsin's reformist government, also voted by 147 to 10 to demand the sacking of Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov.

Mr. Fyodorov, 35, is the standard-bearer of Mr. Yeltsin's pro-market reforms. He had left the chamber after an early round of talks, angering deputies who thought he was running away from his responsibilities.

Mr. Fyodorov had earlier urged deputies to curb monetary growth or risk propelling Russia towards hyperinflation. Inflation is running at 20 per cent a month, although the government insists it can still bring it down to 10 per cent by the end of the year.

"History and our people will not forgive us if such a budget is approved. I ask you to block the endorsement of such a budget with such a high deficit," he said, referring to parliament's own budget plans.

Higher spending would mean tens of trillions of extra roubles being pumped into the economy

before the end of 1993. "This means hyperinflation becoming real," he added.

Hyperinflation kicks in when monthly inflation levels reach 50 per cent. Money loses virtually all meaning, capital takes flight and barter replaces cash for many deals.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokhin, responsible for Russia's ties with international organisations, told a news conference the government still aimed to bring monthly inflation down to single figures by the end of the year.

It wanted a budget deficit of under 10 per cent of gross national product by the end of the year, down from current levels just under 20 per cent and well below parliament's own proposals, which would lead to a 25 per cent gap.

Mr. Shokhin said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was concerned at Russia's economic performance although it still had chances of receiving new international financial aid.

But he conceded that it would be hard to agree a standby loan by Oct. 1 — a key condition in deals to reschedule Russia's foreign debts. "We are short of time and the situation is not the best," he said.

"We will talk to the IMF about the possibility of getting the standby credit later, maybe in late autumn. I think there are still chances that we will get both the standby credit and the second tranche of the systemic transformation facility," he added.

The tongue-twisting systemic transformation facility has been set up to help Russia and other former communist states transform their economies into capitalist market systems.

Russia has already received \$1.5 billion under the facility and had been expected to receive another \$1.5 billion this year.

Pakistan lists loan defaulters for poll ban

KARACHI (R) — Pakistan's banking council has published a list of loan defaulters after the caretaker government ruled that anyone who failed to service big debt payments could not stand in October's general election.

The list, which runs to nearly 1,300 pages, names senior figures of nearly all political hues who could be barred from the polls unless they repay their debts by Sept. 13.

"Almost all big politicians, industrialists and businessmen are included," said Mohammad Rafiq, the banking council's executive vice-president.

The list, published Friday night after caretaker President Wasim Sajjad signed an amendment to the banking laws, covers people who are a year or more overdue on repayment of debts of at least one million rupees (\$33,300) to banks, companies or other financial institutions.

Opposition leader Benazir Bhutto and her mother Nusrat are listed in connection with a one-million-rupee loan to Mussawat, the newspaper of their Pakistan People's Party.

But banking sources said Ms. Benazir, one of the two main

contenders for prime minister, would escape the election ban as she held a share of less than 51 per cent in the newspaper.

Her husband, former member of parliament Asif Ali Zardari, is named as a director in a company which defaulted on a loan in 1985 and now owes 7.2 million (\$240,000).

Shahbaz Sharif, the prominent member of ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif, is included but banking sources said he would be removed from a revised list as he recently repaid his debts.

Parliamentary speaker Gausar Ayub is named as a defaulter. So are Ali Khan Junejo, food and agriculture minister in the current caretaker government, and Chaudhry Shujat Hussain, interior minister in Mr. Sharif's cabinet.

The entire family of Anwar Saifullah, son-in-law of former president Ghulam Ishaq Khan, is on the list, as are a swathe of top industrialists and senior military officers.

Banking sources said the amount due from defaulters could be as high as 95 billion rupees (\$3.2 billion) — the same as Pakistan's huge budget deficit.

Iraq issues shares for 2 state-owned companies

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq is selling 75 per cent of two of its largest state-owned companies to private investors, Baghdad newspapers reported Saturday.

The higher authorities have agreed to allow the private sector to buy up to 75 per cent of the two largest companies of the ministry of industry and minerals," they said.

They are the cement factory of Muthana and the brick factory of Shatra, they said.

"Soon the shares of these two firms will be issued and sold at Baghdad's stock exchange," the newspaper said.

The papers gave no reason for turning the two companies into private hands but said they were selected for their high efficiency despite U.N. sanctions. No details of the companies' annual turnover were given. But the press said the sell-off of 75 per cent would be "an opportunity to contribute in the building of the Iraqi economy according to a new restructuring."

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Argentina brings down inflation to single digit

VILLA GOBERNADOR GALVEZ (R) — After decades of being a case study in ruinous inflation, Argentina returned Friday to single-digit yearly price rises.

Just four years ago hyperinflation was tripling prices in a month, upsetting the economy and making even an ordinary trip to the grocery store difficult.

But President Carlos Menem announced Friday that this month's consumer price inflation would be 0.2 per cent or less — the lowest figure in almost 20 years.

In the year ending on Aug. 31, Argentine consumer prices will thus have risen less than 10 per cent.

"Measuring it August to August, we have broken into single digits," Mr. Menem said at the opening of a meat-processing plant owned by a subsidiary of the Campbell Soup Co.

The Peronist president took over in July 1989 from his Radical Party predecessor Raul Alfonsín, who decided to step down half a year early as a result of mad price rises which had brought the country to the brink of collapse.

On Friday, underscoring the difference, Mr. Menem recalled

that when he took office inflation was running at around 5,000 per cent a year.

Mr. Menem and Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo have pegged the local currency, the peso, to the dollar at a one-to-one parity and passed a law that bars the government from printing any money unless it has the reserves to back it up.

The currency at the time of Mr. Alfonsín, the austral, had gone from being worth more than \$1 — it was quoted at 0.85 to the dollar at birth in 1985 — to 690 per dollar when Mr. Menem took over.

It was phased out last January, having sunk to 10,000 per dollar with a brief resurgence of hyperinflation early in Mr. Menem's administration.

The peso, bolstered by income from the sale of the major state-run concerns, is now strong enough for the central bank to regularly sell U.S. dollars for pesos on the local market — just \$200,000 on Friday, but often tens of millions.

Mr. Menem is determined to carry on his free-market economic reforms by holding on to power for a second term.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY AUGUST 29, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A brilliant day to use logical reasoning that is the result of Moon, Mars and Jupiter and to enjoy an especially positive time with companions you like most. Keep the standards by which you were reared.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You find matters pertaining to an old or from a distance and disappointing while at the same time you see ways to get more respect in your community.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Communications are at the centre of your activities, those that have been long standing are difficult but new types of messages can be well handled.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Your practical affairs that the spotlight even though it is Sunday but don't take up old issues now but get into more current obligations.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) Think about what you can do to bring your personal activities up to date and don't hold on so closely to outdated, worn out conditions.

LEO (July 22 to August 21) A plan of action so you can get ahead does not seem to be working well so get together with persons who understand current means to operate with results.

VIRGO (August 22 to September 22) Consider seriously the ac-

quaintances you see today and make sure they are those who are aware of what your personal longings actually are.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Whenever your public interests make sure that you approach them from a different slant; put behind you doing them the very easy way.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Forget those old concerns and be off to places where you can get a lofty understanding of how to make your life more in tune with the times.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Don't get into or continue an argument with attachment that leads nowhere but consider your present financial condition to have all the best.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 20) You can have a difficult day if you allow yourself to dwell upon negative conditions but by organising your efforts you can gain success.

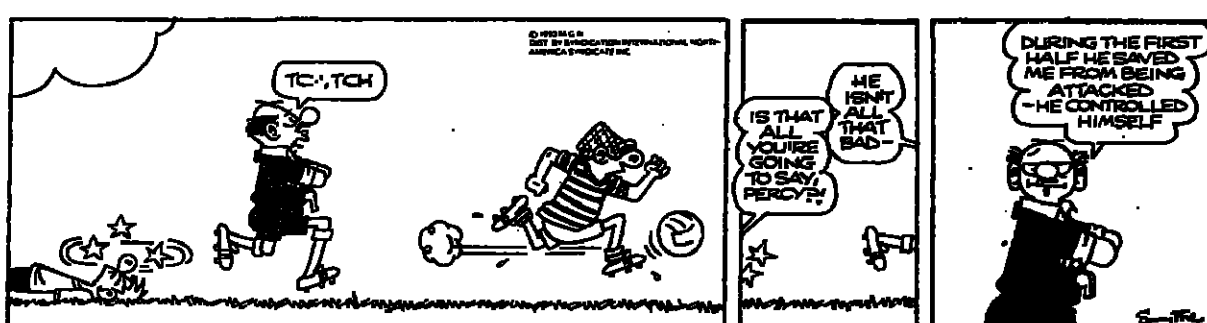
AQUARIUS (January 21 to February 19) Don't let a friend interfere in some good work you wish to do today but instead get off with a close attachment who cares for you, be happy.

PISCES (February 20 to March 20) Long time pleasures would not do for you what you wish and you would be wise to get in some interests that have more colour, beauty in them.

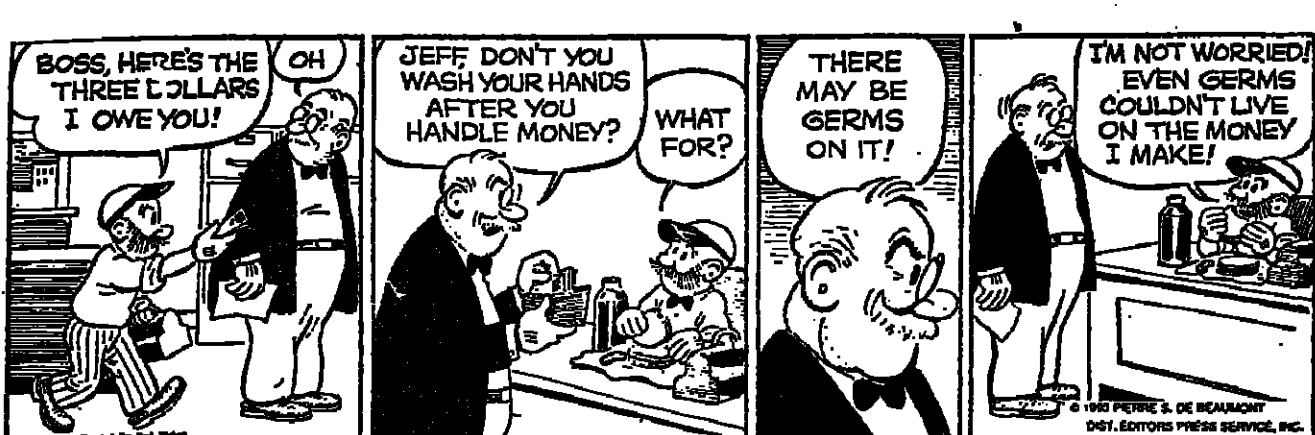
Peanuts



Andy Capp



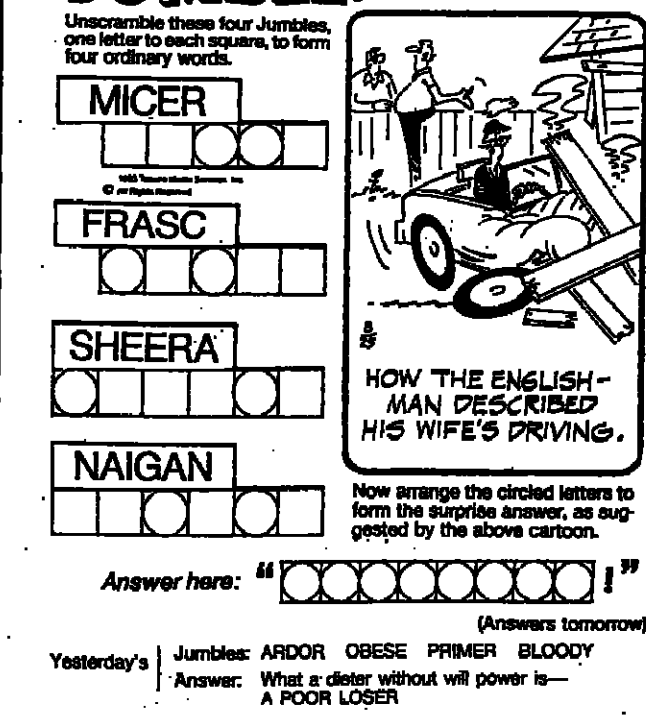
Mutt'n'Jeff



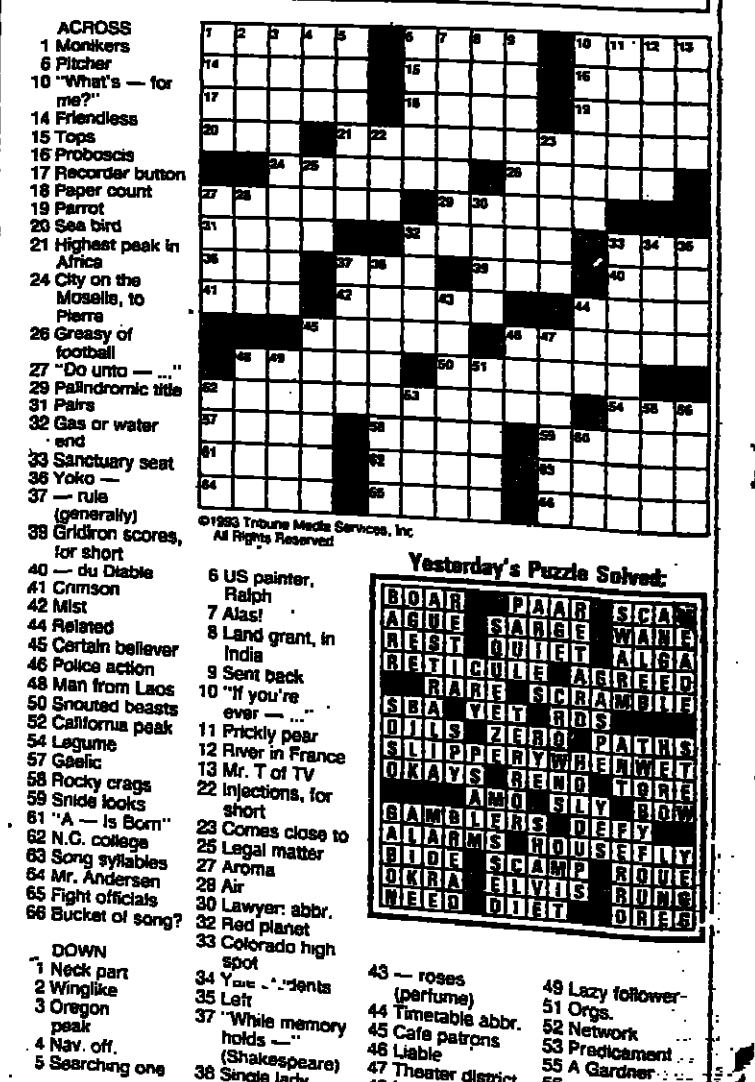
THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword by Melvin Kenworthy



Azeri refugees flee towards Baku

BEYLAGAN, Azerbaijan (Agencies) — About 200,000 refugees are fleeing ethnic strife in southwestern Azerbaijan and large numbers may spill over into Iran if Armenian forces block their escape, Western officials say.

U.N. officials said Friday they believed the refugees were moving eastwards along the Iranian frontier and up dusty roads towards the Azeri capital Baku.

Aid agencies say tens of thousands could start pouring into Iran, over the Araks River which marks the frontier, if the Armenians succeed in cutting off southern Azerbaijan.

Iran, with a large ethnic Azeri population of its own, does not want to import trouble and has several times protested against what it calls Armenian aggression near its borders.

A five-year Azeri-Armenian struggle for control of disputed Nagorno-Karabakh has spilled over the borders of that territory, with Armenians capturing large tracts in Azerbaijan itself.

For many Azeris, war, chaos and suffering have made a mockery of a referendum scheduled for Sunday on confidence in President Abulfaz Elchibey, who fled his capital two months ago to escape an armed insurrection.

But local officials in Beylagan, bordering the southern front, played down difficulties of organising the poll in a town whose 53,000 population has been swelled by 80,000 refugees.

They also expressed no doubts about the legitimacy of a vote in such conditions.

"We'll just put voting urns out on the road where there are refugee camps. Everyone will be able to vote. And people are so filled with rage against Elchibey for letting the war get to this stage that I have no doubt of the result," said Vagif Akhmedov, deputy head of Beylagan District Administration.

The refugees themselves, huddled among huge piles of brightly coloured bedding between trees or ramshackle lorries, have nothing to say about politics. Some spit at the ground when they hear Elchibey's name. Some shrug or mutter obscenities.

Most politely hear out the question and then resume a lament closer to their hearts: "The police say go and die somewhere else. Where are we to go? We have nowhere left to run."

Some refugees have trudged to within 80 kilometres of Baku's outskirts but police are stopping them short of the overcrowded capital. Thousands of homeless fleeing fighting in the southwest are camping on the road leading from the war zone, most with no food or water.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry said heavy fighting was continuing around the southwestern village of Gyuliyabird, Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency reported. It said Armenian army units were trying to capture both Gyuliyabird and another village, "where there is now bloody fighting."

"If Gyuliyabird falls... the way to the road leading to the regional capital of Gubati will be open, to the enemy", TASS quoted De-

fence Ministry experts as saying. Armenian authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh accused the Azeri side in turn of attacking their forces to the south. They said two Karabakh soldiers had been blown up by a mine, while a father and son had been killed in the Krasnoselsk border region of Armenia Thursday when an Azeri shell hit their car.

Meanwhile, Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Friday Iran will be receiving U.N. relief aid for refugees fleeing Azerbaijan's conflict with Armenia.

Also, Iran has sent more troops to its northwest border region because of the large numbers of refugees congregating there, according to a Tehran Radio broadcast monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp.

The broadcast claimed some 50,000 refugees were now along the Iranian border. The report did not say how many more Iranian troops had been sent to the area.

IRNA, monitored in Cyprus, said Hishiti Misa, head of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Tehran, promised relief aid for the refugees on a visit Thursday to the border.

The report did not say how many refugees had fled to Iran. Mr. Misa was quoted as saying the UNHCR would provide only for those refugees already in Iran.

Iran says refugees have been entering the country in recent days. Armenian forces recently pushed through southern Azer-

baijan towards the Iranian border, capturing a key town and encircling several others.

IRNA quoted an unidentified Iranian official as saying "the refugees are in dire need of substantial assistance."

More than 15,000 people have been killed in the five-year war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-inhabited enclave inside predominantly Muslim Azerbaijan.

Iran has warned Armenia that it would not remain "indifferent" to a further Armenian advance inside Azerbaijan.

On Saturday, Anatolian News Agency said Turkey is to launch another diplomatic initiative to try to halt Armenian thrusts into Azeri territory.

It quoted Ozdem Sanberk, undersecretary at the Turkish Foreign Ministry, as saying on his return from a visit to Baku that Turkey would contact Russia, Georgia and Iran to discuss a possible joint statement demanding an Armenia withdrawal from occupied Az. land.

Mr. Sanberk reiterated that Turkey had no plans to intervene militarily in the Azeri-Armenian conflict.

"But Turkey will never accept the breach of international law. Nor will the countries of the region. Sooner or later Armenia will pay the price. We want it to pay soon," he said.

Prime Minister Tansu Ciller is expected to discuss the Azeri-Armenian conflict during a visit to Russia next month.

Buthelezi threatens to quit if his party joins S. African elections

ULUNDI, South Africa (Agencies) — Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi threatened Saturday to quit as leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) should his Zulu-based movement decide to participate in South Africa's planned election.

Mr. Buthelezi strongly rejected participating in the country's first non-racial poll, scheduled for April 27, telling as congress of the IFP youth that he would "seriously consider" his position as IFP president should the party decide to contest the election.

"I will not, I repeat, I will not participate in an election for a Constituent Assembly," Mr. Buthelezi said at the conference held in Ulundi, the capital of his powerbase KwaZulu homeland.

The IFP is planning to hold a special conference later this year

to decide its strategy for the proposed elections.

Mr. Buthelezi said the IFP's bitter rival African National Congress (ANC) planned to use next year's elections to gain a majority in the Constituent Assembly so that the black nationalist movement could draft a final constitution in its favour.

In this effort the ANC had President Frederik De Klerk's white minority government "safely tucked in their back pocket," Mr. Buthelezi said.

He also gave his by now routine warning of civil war should the IFP's demands for strong federal government be ignored.

"I say to you today that I will not lead any fight in an election to become part of the proceedings which I know are going inevitably

to lead to civil war."

The government and the ANC support a two-stage transition process in which joint executive councils level the playing field prior to the election for a Constituent Assembly which would draw up a final constitution.

The IFP wants a one-step process that would see the present unelected multi-party forum draw up a final constitution which would be tested by a referendum before final elections.

Meanwhile ANC President Nelson Mandela said the African National Congress may call for lifting all remaining economic sanctions against South Africa in the next 17 days.

He said the decision could come before Sept. 13, when parliament is scheduled to begin a special session.

Japan coalition agrees on reform

TOKYO (R) — Japan's ruling coalition parties have agreed on a set of political reforms, one of the main tasks facing the government of Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa. Japanese newspapers reported Saturday.

The set of reform bills will be submitted to the extraordinary Diet session which is expected to meet next month, news reports said.

Government officials could not be reached for comment.

The coalition government has pledged to implement political reforms this year.

The reform package calls for abolishing corporate donations to individual politicians.

But corporate donations to political parties will be allowed to continue for the time being.

Coalition parties agreed to review corporate donations to political parties in five years in defer-

ence to the Socialist Party — a core member of the multi-party coalition — which urged a total ban.

To help make up for the loss in campaign funds, the coalition parties proposed public financing of election campaigns.

Under the draft proposal, each citizen would be called to shoulder 500 yen (\$4) — which would add up to about 60 billion yen (\$576 million) nationwide — to help pay for election campaigns.

They also agreed to replace the House of Representatives' multi-seat constituency with a combination of 250 single-seat districts and 250 seats through proportional representation.

Under the new electoral system, voters would cast two votes. One would be cast for an individual candidate in the voter's single-seat constituency, and another for a party in a nationwide poll.

Under the existing multi-seat electoral system, as many as five seats may be allocated to an electoral district.

This has often meant candidates from the same party ended up competing against each other.

The system has been blamed as a major reason for Japan's money politics.

Mr. Hosokawa, who was elected prime minister this month, has said he will stake his political future on pushing through political reforms.

The coalition government, formed this month, put an end to 38 years of unbroken rule by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

The LDP is generally credited for having brought about Japan's economic revival after World War II, but it was also tainted by a spate of corruption scandals involving leading party members that has disenchanted many Japanese voters.

U.N. suspends sanctions against Haiti

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The U.N. Security Council suspended sanctions against the impoverished Caribbean nation of Haiti, with diplomats saying oil was expected to reach the country again within a week.

The suspension takes effect immediately but the embargo on oil, arms and financial assets can be re-imposed if an agreement to restore democracy is violated.

Sanctions are not expected to be lifted permanently until after exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide returns home, scheduled for Oct. 30.

Friday's vote on the resolution, one of the few ever to lift sanctions, was adopted by a unanimous 15-0 vote.

The White House immediately hailed the Security Council action and said the Treasury Department would suspend trade restrictions and move towards unfreezing Haiti's bank accounts in the United States.

Mr. Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest and the country's first

democratically elected president, was ousted in a military coup in September 1991.

Under a U.N.-brokered July 3 peace plan signed by Mr. Aristide and General Raoul Cedras, the military commander who overthrew him, the embargo was to be suspended once a new prime minister took office.

Mr. Aristide's choice, businessman Robert Malval, has been approved by parliament. He is to be inaugurated Monday in Washington where Mr. Aristide is in exile.

Haiti's ambassador, Fritz Longchamp, told reporters the military would have never agreed to relinquish power without the sanctions, damaging as they were to the country's economy.

"I don't think it was too high a price to pay," he said. "I think it is the only thing that has gotten the military to the bargaining table."

But he warned that "people inside and outside" the military were trying to sabotage the return

of Aristide and urged the council to remain vigilant.

"Five days ago someone was executed because he was putting up a poster of Aristide," he said.

The worldwide sanctions were imposed on June 16 and went into effect a week later.

"We knew that imposing sanctions would send a clear and unequivocal message to those who would extinguish the democratic flame and in so doing allow their own nation to collapse," said Security Council President Madeleine Albright of the United States.

Washington hopes to move quickly in getting reconstruction aid for Haiti in a move to stabilise the country whose citizens were streaming into the United States by the thousands since the coup.

"The United States will continue to play a leadership role in the international community's programme of support and assistance for the democratisation of Haiti," the White House said in a statement.

Jackson probe focusing on blackmail claims

LOS ANGELES (R) — Los Angeles police are investigating allegations by aides to superstar Michael Jackson that the father of the boy who accused Jackson of molesting him had tried to blackmail the singer, an official close to the case said Friday.

Jackson's representatives have contended that the sex-abuse claims grew out of a botched extortion plot. The official said the entertainer's aides were now directly accusing the boy's father, a wealthy Beverly Hills dentist.

The aides, according to the official, allege that the man sought Jackson's participation in a \$20 million film production deal and when the entertainer turned him down, threatened to go public with allegations of molestation.

In an interview with KCAL-TV, a teenage Australian boy said the entertainer told him by phone he was upset about the scandal and that "people were just trying to get money from him or blackmail him."

Anthony Pellicano, Jackson's security consultant, said Jackson's camp did not report the alleged extortion attempt to police earlier because he was stinging the blackmailers along to get information from them.

But the television station cited sources saying that before the controversy became public, Jackson's staff, while denying the sex allegations, had offered to pay the father \$350,000 to keep quiet. The man is said to have rejected it.

As the embattled singer emerged from seclusion to resume his concert tour in Bangkok Friday, officials said police had so

far uncovered no physical evidence to support filing criminal charges against him.

The superstar, who had isolated himself in a Bangkok hotel suite for two days complaining of dehydration, returned to a widely enthusiastic reception by 70,000 screaming fans packed into Thailand's National Stadium.

Elizabeth Taylor, Jackson's close friend, boarded a Singapore-bound plane Friday to be at his side for his next concert stop over the weekend.

Pop star Janet Jackson was reported to be planning a trip next week to join her brother on tour in Asia.

Police opened a criminal investigation on Aug. 17 after the boy, in a therapy session arranged by his father, alleged he was sexually abused by Jackson during a four-month relationship.

According to the case file from the Department of Children's Services, the therapist who reported the allegations said the father brought the boy to him after "negotiations with Mr. Jackson's attorneys were not successful" in reaching a settlement.

The father is known as the "dentist to the stars" and has close ties to Hollywood, recently receiving a credit for a screenplay.

Mr. Pellicano told KCAL-TV he expected the investigation to be over within a week and was certain Jackson would be exonerated.

At least two other young boys questioned by police have been shown on television admitting they sometimes slept in the same bed as Jackson but insisting that he never molested them.



Pop star Michael Jackson performs in Bangkok Friday

Meanwhile Jackson swooped into the normally staid island-state of Singapore Saturday for another stop on his world tour.

Tour organisers said Jackson arrived at Singapore's Changi Airport from Thailand.

Jackson's first performance in Singapore Sunday has been sold out, with 45,000 people expected to attend. Some tickets still remain for the Monday show.

Jackson spent his last hours in Bangkok leading 150 Royal Thai Air Force Academy cadets around a field in a silent parade.

The march will eventually be put to music and used in a video, Jackson aides said.

Jackson is expected to come to South Korea next month to visit

the Taejeon World Expo '93, news reports said Saturday.

State radio said Jackson wanted to visit the exhibition in Taejeon, 85 kilometres south of Seoul.

A government official said they were not aware of Jackson's reported plans. "But if he wants to visit Expo, we can't stop him," the official said.

Earlier this month the Ministry of Culture rejected an application to include South Korea on Jackson's Dangerous world tour.

Performances were forbidden because it was said they would exert a negative influence on society. The United States has urged South Korea to reconsider its refusal but the government official said there was no change.

NEWS IN BRIEF

4 Khmer Rouge generals defect

PHNOM PENH (Agencies) — Four Khmer Rouge generals defected from the radical faction as the head of the U.N. military force in Cambodia claimed the guerrillas no longer had a reason to exist. Minister of Information Khieu Kanharith said Friday the four generals, who were identified as Leu Ponch, Srey Nan, Tep Phum and Pin Dy, defected following the new United Cambodian Armed Forces' attack on the radical faction's bases in northwest Cambodia. The attacks in the northwest were part of a nationwide offensive to cut off the guerrillas' supply lines and capture their logistics bases. U.N. force commander Lieutenant General John Sanderson said the government offensive, the largest military operation mounted since 1989, came in response to the Khmer Rouge "adopting a threatening posture." Meanwhile the U.N. Security Council said all U.N. military personnel will be withdrawn from Cambodia by Nov. 15, but the civilian U.N. mission will continue until a new government is installed in September. U.N. troops are already pulling out of Cambodia, where they were sent to supervise elections in May. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali recommended extension of the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia mandate if a new government has not been established by Sept. 15.

Japan, Russia fail to set summit date

TOKYO (R) — Senior Japanese and Russian officials failed to set a date for Russian President Boris Yeltsin's visit to Japan after two days of talks which ended Saturday, Kyodo News Service said. The Russian delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Kunadze, also declined to make concessions on a sensitive territorial issue and the talks ended without major progress, Kyodo said. Foreign Ministry officials were unavailable for comment. Mr. Yeltsin has postponed a visit to Japan twice in the past year. The new Japanese government renewed calls Friday for Russia to quickly return the Kuril Islands, off northern Japan, echoing initiatives of the previous cabinet in the decades-old territorial dispute, officials said. "Discussion shouldn't go backward," Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata told Mr. Kunadze, referring to talks on the islands seized by the former Soviet Union at the end of World War II, officials said. "We must advance the talks," Mr. Hata, also vice prime minister, told Mr. Kunadze.

Strike paralyses Nigerian capital

LAGOS (AFP) — Lagos looked like a ghost town Saturday, on the first day of an indefinite civil disobedience campaign launched by Nigeria's Central Trade Union Organisation. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) said the unelected interim government led by Ernest Shonekan was unconstitutional and in protest called for an "indefinite" civil disobedience campaign to begin at midnight Friday. However it was impossible Saturday morning to tell whether the streets were empty in response to the NLC's call or whether, like all last Saturdays of the month, Nigerians were off the streets because they were consigned at home until midday to help with cleaning streets and removing garbage. The strike also hit operations at Nigerian airport. Some domestic flights were cancelled and the Civil Aviation Authorities decided to suspend ground operations at Lagos Airport between 9 p.m. (2000 GMT) and 7 a.m. (0600 GMT). The effect on international flights was not clear. Members of the National Union of Air Transport Service Employees (NUATSE) began the strike Saturday morning as part of a trade union campaign to make the authorities recognise the results of a presidential election annulled in June.

Remains of U.S. plane found in Armenia

MOSCOW (R) — Fragments of a U.S. military aircraft shot down during an intelligence mission over Soviet territory in 1958 have been found in western Armenia, the Russian, News Agency (ITAR-TASS) said. TASS quoted a U.S. official as saying a search would continue for up to 11 missing Americans who were among the aircraft's 17 crew. It said residents of the village of Sasunashen, near Tain, led U.S. diplomats to the crash site after the U.S. embassy in Yerevan appealed for information about the aircraft. U.S. experts visited the region and Loma Berg, a sister of one of the plane's crew, recognised a metal trinket found at the site which belonged to her brother Archie, the agency said. TASS reported that a senior officer of the U.S. search team, Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Trojan, said the bodies of six crew were handed over by Soviet authorities at the time. But those of another 11 men aboard the aircraft had never been traced, and they were still listed as missing.

Doctors amputated woman's leg in false cancer scare

LONDON (AFP) — A young physical education student is to sue doctors who amputated her right leg after wrongly diagnosing the presence of a cancer tumour in her knee. Lawyers for Vicki Hunter, 20, said late Friday she was to sue the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham, central Britain, for negligence. The hospital is at the centre of a growing scandal since it emerged Friday that hospital staff had wrongly diagnosed 42 people for cancer.

Ms. Hunter was first diagnosed as having a tumour in her right knee by a hospital in Leeds, northern Britain which then sent her to Birmingham for treatment where cancer was confirmed. She was given numerous doses of chemotherapy and had her right leg amputated above the knee.

According to her lawyers, Ms. Hunter was informed at the beginning of the week that "a misdiagnosis had occurred and therefore the majority if not all of her treatment had been unnecessary."

Almost 1,800 people in and around Birmingham will have to undergo a fresh series of cancer screenings after the hospital made 42 false diagnoses during earlier tests, a health official has said. The 42 people, many of them children, either received treatment for bone cancer they did not have — including chemotherapy or operations — or were told they were cancer-free when in fact they had the disease, an inquiry into the incident found.

Polluting industries closed to save Taj Mahal

NEW DELHI (AP) — The Supreme Court ordered 21 factories to close because their pollutants are dimming the Taj Mahal's luster. Sulfur fumes from foundries and smoke from private power generators in the industrial belt near the city of Agra have dulled the white marble of the Taj, a 17th century tomb built by a Mogul emperor for his wife. The court said the offending industries failed to respond to notices demanding that they install pollution control devices, news agencies reported. Air samples taken around the Taj, 120 miles (195 kilometres) south of New Delhi, were found to contain as much as eight times the permissible quantity of suspended particles. The court's order was effective immediately. The closure of the factories will throw thousands of people out of work. The inner dome of the tomb blackened from candles that devout Muslims light on the graves of Emperor Shah Jahan and his wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth to their 14th child.

Rabbits feast on Aberdeen pitch

ABERDEEN, Scotland (AFP) — Aberdeen, runners-up to Rangers in all Scotland's major competitions last season, have now been beaten by a four-legged opponent. Safety modifications following the Taylor report have allowed rabbits to get into the Pittodrie Stadium and eat the playing surface. Groundsman Jim Warrender has had to clear up the results of their feast with a brush and shovel every day.

Tenacious, crippled beggar jailed for four months

MACAO (AP) — A crippled beggar from China who entered Macao illegally three times this year and moved about on a skateboard-like contraption has been jailed for four months. In passing the sentence Thursday, the district court in this Portuguese colony warned that others like Zhang Shaolin would suffer similar punishment. Zhang, a 30-year-old pious victim, was believed to have entered Macao by ferry from neighbouring China. He had been caught twice before, given a suspended sentence and deported. Newspaper reports said beggars in Macao can make about \$6 a day, far more than in China.

Wrong house demolished

MANILA (AP) — Over the protests of the owner, workmen dutifully demolished a house on orders of a court. Trouble was, it was the wrong house. Jose Moreno, no filed criminal and administrative charges against Judge Benjamin Pelayo and Deputy Sheriff Mario Tamag for allegedly ordering the "unauthorised" demolition of his house in July 1992. In his complaint, Mr. Moreno said the crews had a court order to tear down the house of Marietta Villamil because it had been built on property he did not own and without a building permit. But the wrong order apparently had said, Mr. Moreno's father, Juan Moreno, a lawyer, said in the motion, that the judge should have listened to the "vehement protests" of his son and held hearings to verify the address.

UEFA get tough with Olympique Marseille

GENEVA (AFP) — European football governing body UEFA got tough Friday by threatening to bypass French soccer bosses and to ban European Cup holders Olympique Marseille from this season's competition.

A spokesman revealed a meeting of UEFA's emergency executive committee is due to go ahead early next month to try and sort out the mess after the French champions were accused of match-fixing.

UEFA made their move after the French Football Federation announced that disciplinary hearings into the case would not begin until September 4 — and that no sanctions would be decided before the end of September.

That date is after the August 30 deadline set by UEFA for members to withdraw clubs from the European Champions Cup and would mean Marseille starting their title defence in the first round against AEK Athens September 15.

A UEFA spokesman said: "For the moment, we are waiting for August 30, the date we fixed after the European Cup draws in July and when we were expecting a communication from the French authorities to discover if Marseille is still representing France in the European Cup or whether a replacement would be chosen."

"With respect to that reply, the emergency executive committee will grasp the problem at the start of September, in conjunction with FIFA, rather than the commission for inter-club competitions or UEFA's disciplinary commission."

He said UEFA would make its position clear in an announcement on Aug. 31.

UEFA's announcement appears to be a clear warning that it is not ready to put up with delays in the French investigation into the affair, which began when three Valenciennes players

accused Marseille official Jean-Pierre Bernes and player Jean-Jacques Eydelie of offering bribes to throw a May 20 league match.

Marseille won 1-0, virtually assuring themselves of a fifth straight league title.

Bernes, Eydelie, Valenciennes players Jorge Buruchaga and Christophe Robert, and Robert's wife, have since been charged with corruption, while Marseille president Bernard Tapie stands accused of trying to bribe former Valenciennes trainer Boro Primorac to take the blame for the affair.

The French Federation Disciplinary Committee was to hear the eight leading protagonists in the case Friday but it was called off because most of those involved asked for a postponement as they can under federation rules.

Noel Le Graet, president of the French League, may have goaded UEFA into action after claiming Marseille could not be withdrawn from the European Cup without the agreement of his body as well.

European football chiefs would certainly not want to have to ban Marseille after the competition had got underway, which could throw the final stages of the tournament into confusion and cost massive potential earnings.

Police meanwhile raided Tapie's Paris offices for the fifth time in a month Friday.

Police said six inspectors went to the headquarters of Bernard Tapie Finance (BTF) near the Champs Elysee to take photographs inside and outside the building.

Noelle Bellone, secretary general of the BTF, said "this is the fifth raid in less than a month. It is like 'showbusiness justice' and persecution."

She added she had refused to open the office of the football club president or to cooperate with the police photographing and taking of measurements.

Witt training for her comeback attempt

PARIS (AP) — Two-time Olympic champion Katarina Witt knows she has a lot of work ahead in her comeback attempt.

Right now, Witt says her "life" consists of "training, training, training, skating, skating, skating — and sleeping."

Witt, 27, feels her maturity and femininity will help her in competition against skaters more than 10 years younger and technically better than Witt was in her winning years.

"I will try to make a combination, and to bring in what I can bring in," Witt said. "I am older. I am more mature and I think my movements are even better. Maybe I am more feminine."

"That is why I am working as hard as I can right now."

Witt, who announced her comeback last January after the international skating union agreed to allow pros to be readmitted to Olympic competition, will have to finish in the top two at the

German championships in December to enter the Olympics. She and her former coach, Jutta Mueller, returned to the training ice last April.

The German won the Olympic women's singles title in 1984 and 1988 in addition to four World Championships.

But the sport has changed since then, and Witt knows it. The top women are doing more triple jumps in competition routines than Witt ever did.

She says it is difficult to compare the generations.

"You have to see the skaters there were skating then. I was the best and that was why I won the Olympics," Witt said. "From '88 to now, I have grown up."

Her task to qualify for Lillehammer will be difficult. Germans Marina Kielmann and Tanja Szewczenko finished in the top 10 in the World Championships last match in Prague.

Christie, Jackson defeated in Berlin IAAF sponsor ordered to pay Reynolds

BERLIN (Agencies) — Sprint king Linford Christie was the prize head to fall at the Berlin Grand Prix athletics meeting Friday as one world champion after another took a beating.

It was the perfect night for revenge as the big names failed to rediscover the golden sparkle of Stuttgart.

Great Britain's Christie was forced back into third in the 100m, world record holder Colin Jackson could do no better and long jumper Heike Drechsler was outshone for once.

There was also defeat for graceful Cuban high-jumper star Ioanette Quintero.

Even the lure of \$255,000 worth of gold bars — to be shared among athletes winning at the big four meetings of Oslo, Zurich, Here and Brussels September 3 — could not bring out the best in some athletes.

But their disappointments were balanced by wins for Algerian Noureddine Morceli and the indestructible American Michael Johnson — both right on course for their share in the booty on offer.

Christie had only been beaten once this season before Berlin — and the same man did it again.

American Leroy Burrell, who failed to make the U.S. world championships 100m team for Stuttgart, won in 10.12, while Jon Drummond, who split Christie and Lewis earlier in the year at Gateshead, came second in 10.13.

Christie, who looked sluggish out of the blocks, fought back in the second half of the race but could not quite close the gap, despite finishing in the same time as Drummond.

Jackson, who stunned Stuttgart with a world record on his way to gold, also failed to lift his spirits.

This time he could only finish third behind friend and rival Mark McKoy and world bronze medalist Jack Pierce.

McKoy, who took the 1991 world crown, missed the championships because he refused to return to Canada for the national trials, arguing he should be selected automatically.

Morceli, who only appeared at the World Championships after a last-minute u-turn over his claims



Butch Reynolds

athletics chiefs had paid appearance money to a selected few, was in sparkling form.

He looked certain of breaking Steve Cram's record of 3:46.32, as he had predicted he would, and was almost three seconds up at one stage and still well within schedule with 150m to go.

Implicably however, he tried to finish in 3:46.78, followed home by Abdi Bile, who won bronze at Stuttgart.

American Johnson, fresh from his individual and relay golds in Germany after moving up from 200m, stormed to victory again, flurrying with Butch Reynolds' world record of 43.29 despite the cold conditions to end on 43.94.

Another athlete chasing the billion is Mozambique's first women world champion, who repeated her Stuttgart feat by winning the 800m in 1:57.99 ahead of Russia's Svetlana Masterkova.

For those with something to prove, there was a prime performance from Jackie Joyner-Kersey, the American heptathlete world champion who ducked out of his long jump at Stuttgart but returned here to beat Drechsler.

Other performances of note came from Ireland's Sonia O'Sullivan, who got back to winning form in the women's 5,000m — although sceptics noted there wasn't a Chinese athlete in site to

thwart her this time — and Merlene Ottey of Jamaica.

She won the 100m in front of Irina Privalova, the blonde Russian, although that would have been no consolation for losing the World Championship gold medal in a photo-finish to Gail Devers.

Mobil to pay Reynolds

In Alexandria, Virginia, world 400-metre record holder Butch Reynolds won another battle with international athletics authorities over a disputed drug ban when a U.S. judge Friday ordered a major sponsor of the sport to pay the runner nearly \$700,000.

Federal Magistrate W. Curtis Sewell ordered Mobil Corporation to pay Reynolds \$691,667 that it owed to the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) under Mobil's sponsorship contract with the sport's international governing body.

Reynolds' suit in the United States district court in Alexandria, Virginia, was part of an attempt to collect the \$27.3 million judgement he won last December against the IAAF for damages resulting from his 28-month suspension for failing a 1990 doping test.

Reynolds has always maintained his innocence and insisted that the IAAF drug testing lab had made procedural errors in handling his urine samples.

After exhausting all his appeals with the IAAF, Reynolds brought a suit in a U.S. federal court in Columbus, Ohio, where judge Joseph Kinneary ordered the IAAF to pay him \$27.3 million in damages and penalties.

IAAF President Primo Nebiolo has insisted throughout that no court in the United States has jurisdiction over his organisation and has said repeatedly the IAAF will never pay Reynolds. Last month, Judge Kinneary ruled that his court did have jurisdiction.

Attorneys for Reynolds have said they will try to collect the money from a number of U.S. corporations that sponsor IAAF-sanctioned events.

Judge Sewell ordered that the \$661,667 from Mobil be held by the court pending appeal proceedings.

Edberg tries for Open hat-trick

FLUSHING MEADOW, New York (AFP) — The famed hustler and bustle of New York has left many a tourist baffled and bruised, and for a long time Stefan Edberg was no exception.

But those days are gone.

The soft-spoken Swede, who has adopted Wimbledon's London as his home and the Australian Open's Melbourne as his winter stomping grounds, is well on his way to becoming a fixture in the big apple.

Getting there, with back-to-back wins in the U.S. Open in 1991 and '92, wasn't easy, and staying there will be even harder.

Edberg is seeded only third this year, behind one former winner, Pete Sampras, and Jim Courier, a man hungry for Grand Slam success after near misses at Wimbledon and the French Open.

Sampras claimed the world number one spot after his independence day Wimbledon vic-

tory, finally living up to the promise of his 1990 U.S. Open title.

But Courier reclaimed the top spot just last week, and professed himself more ready than he has ever been to take on the Open.

Of course the top three have more than each other to worry about.

Germany's Boris Becker, champion in 1989, unpredictable Croatian Goran Ivanisevic, towering youngster Andre Medvedev of Ukraine and French Open champion Sergi Bruguera of Spain are all lurking in Courier's half of the draw — and that may be the easy half.

The other half includes Sampras, Edberg, Andre Agassi, Michael Chang, Petr Korda and Michael Stich.

This year's women's singles are defined as much by who's missing as by who is here.

Monica Seles will miss the chance at a third straight title, as

she continues her painstaking recovery from a stab wound suffered in an attack at a tournament in Hamburg last April.

In her absence the field is led by world number one Steffi Graf, who rides a wave of five straight tournament victories into the Open.

Her success in the past two months answers questions about her fitness, called into doubt after she complained of chronic foot pain in the wake of her Wimbledon triumph.

Graf clearly seems a cut above her challengers.

Second-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain still has a game more suited to clay than the hardcourts of flushing meadows.

In Gabriela Sabatini, Graf will have an old rival to contend with, but one who has shown little fire recently.

It remains to be seen if Czech

Jana Novotna has regrouped since her spectacular Wimbledon failure, when her collapse in the final handed Graf the title.

And then there's Martina Navratilova, seeded third, the 36-year-old certainly has the experience.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Maradona hit with \$3.5 million fine

MADRID (AFP) — Spanish club Sevilla has fined Diego Maradona between \$3 and \$3.5 million dollars for behaviour detrimental to the club, said Madrid publication AS on Friday. Maradona, sacked by Sevilla June 29, is now back in his native Argentina. One of football's greatest ever players, who lifted the World Cup for Argentina seven years ago, has been accused of behaviour detrimental to the image of the club, hindering their chances of a UEFA cup place. The article said the huge fine may be because of Sevilla's financial problems as they still owe Dutch company Septor holding money from their purchase of Maradona from Italian club Napoli.

Sports doping experts in biggest ever conference

LONDON (AFP) — Over 200 delegates from 60 countries will attend the Fourth World Conference on Sports Doping next month in the biggest meeting of experts on the subject ever assembled. From September 5 to 8 they will discuss progress being made in the anti-doping movement, how to establish an effective programme and how to develop international cooperation. The princess royal of Britain will deliver the keynote address September 6. Other speakers will include Prince Alexandre de Merode of the International Olympic Committee's Medical Commission, former olympic 400 metres hurdles champion Ed Moses, Professor Weng Qingchang from China and James Tolliver of the American Drug Enforcement Agency.

Kankkunen heads top trio in 1000 Lakes Rally

JYVASKYLA, Finland (AFP) — Finns Juha Kankkunen and Ari Vatanen and Frenchman Didier Auriol were battling out at the top of the leaderboard Friday after the first day of the 1,000 Lakes Rally. The trio were just 9 seconds apart, triple world champion Kankkunen (Toyota) leading Teammator Auriol (Toyota) by seven and Vatanen (Subaru) a more two behind him. Those positions came after fifteen stages, as the drivers peaked at speeds of up to 200km/h along the nine tracks. Marku Alen could also have been a threat, but the six-time winner of the event crashed out on the first special stage. The Finnish Subaru driver left the road and his car, with a broken radiator, was in no state to carry on.

Prost takes Belgian pole

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium (R) — World championship leader Alain Prost established his supremacy again Saturday when he overhauled Williams team-mate Damon Hill to take pole position for Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix. The "Frenchman, who leads the drivers' title race by 27 points from his old Brazilian rival Ayrton Senna, recorded a new qualifying lap record time of one minute and 47.571 seconds on the high-speed 6.974-kms Spa-Francorchamps Circuit. Prost edged Hill's best time from Friday, which had earned him provisional pole, early in the session and then improved his time in the final minutes to secure the 31st pole position of his career.

English police uncover new hooligan weapon

LONDON (AFP) — English football hooligans have added marine distress flares to their growing armoury, police revealed Friday. Six pocket-sized launchers have been seized and in one or two instances the flare has been fired, according to the head of the metropolitan police football intelligence unit. "They're not designed to be fired in the confined environment of a football ground, so obviously it's something we're concerned about," said Chief Inspector Louisa Elliott. "Most of them come from eastern Europe. People buy them when they're travelling abroad and bring back to this country, where they're not easily obtainable." Until the flare discovery, the hooligans' arsenal consisted of CS gas, hammers, Stanley knife blades, rice flails and a ball and chain.

Bikes stolen from Italian cycling team

OSLO (AP) — Two of the bicycles used by the Italian team to win the World Championship team trial race this week were stolen from a hotel garage Friday. The Norwegian news agency NTB said frames from the two bicycles, which had been dismantled, and two training bikes were taken from a storage room in the garages of Oslo's Holmenkollen Park Hotel, where the team was staying. The theft will not hurt the team when World Championship races resume Saturday because riders had planned to use different bicycles, said the report. NTB said the two racing frames, worth about 100,000 kroner (\$13,600), had been used by Gianfranco Contri and Rosario Fina in their gold-medal ride as part of the Italian time trial foursome Wednesday.

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Bosnian Croats declare their 'republic' in Bosnia

Part of U.N. convoy leaves Mostar after stand off

GRUDE, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — Representatives of the Bosnian Croats meeting here Saturday unanimously declared a "Croat republic" of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

They previously formed a "parliament" of the 58 delegates present during discussion of the latest peace plan for carving up the war-torn nation.

Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban said he hoped to increase his faction's share of Bosnia-Herzegovina envisaged under the Geneva carve-up plans, which he said was currently far too small.

He said the parliament would be a transitional body pending the holding of elections.

It will have two houses, one made up of local leaders of Baban's Croat Democratic Community Movement (HDZ) and the other of Croat deputies from the former central Bosnia-Herzegovina parliament.

The latest developments in the Balkans conflict were:

— The civilian part of a United Nations aid convoy drove out of the Muslim quarter of Mostar, leaving behind U.N. officials and about 70 Spanish peacekeeping soldiers.

In Sarajevo, Bosnia's parliament resumed talks on the Geneva peace plan and was expected to endorse proposals by President

Alija Izetbegovic to continue negotiations on the division of the republic.

— In Pale, Bosnia, Bosnian Serb military leaders faced legislators concerned about their nascent republic's safety from attack if they accept the Geneva peace plan.

— Bosnia's warring sides are observing a lull while their political leaders debate acceptance of the international peace plan for the former Yugoslav republic, Sarajevo Radio said. It reported minimal military activity during the last 24 hours in Sarajevo and other war zones.

— In Zagreb, United Nations convoys set out to take aid to Croats under siege by Muslims in central Bosnia, a spokeswoman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said.

— Bosnian Croats have written to U.S. President Bill Clinton appealing for aid and saying international humanitarian efforts have helped only the Muslim victims of Bosnia's 16-month-old war.

The standoff in Mostar eased Saturday as civilian U.N. personnel and relief workers were allowed to leave, but military observers remained trapped in the Muslim enclave.

A convoy that had brought badly needed aid to some 55,000

Muslims besieged on the east side of Mostar has been prevented from leaving because the Muslims feared renewed attacks by rival Croats if all the U.N. personnel leave. The convoy brought in 113 relief workers and military observers.

A U.N. spokesman in Zagreb said U.N. civilians and other aid workers were allowed to leave, but did not know how many U.N. peacekeepers remained behind. It was also not clear whether the civilians took the 19 trucks with them.

Witnesses watched several United Nations vehicles leave the Muslim quarter at around 1600 (1400 GMT), with one Spanish battalion armoured personnel carrier at the front of the column and one at the rear.

Cedric Thornberry, the U.N. official on Thursday, stayed behind to try to negotiate the release of the Spanish battalion soldiers and vehicles still hostage to the Muslim civilians.

Mr. Thornberry said earlier on Saturday he was trying to secure U.N. "safe area" status for Mostar as part of a deal to allow the convoy to leave.

Croat sniper fire echoed around the Muslim quarter as the vehicles drove out. One woman was killed during the morning and two other civilians injured.



Bosnian Serb parliament deputies discuss the just before the beginning of the session taking place on Jahorina Mount (AFP photo)

Aspin sets conditions for U.S. pullout from Somalia

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. combat troops in Somalia will withdraw once security is established in the capital, heavy weapons are out of the hands of warlords and national police force is set up, Defence Secretary Les Aspin said Friday.

In a speech intended to justify deepened U.S. involvement in Somalia, Mr. Aspin gave no specific timetable for bringing home U.S. forces, which include about 1,200 combat and 2,800 support troops.

The danger now is that unless we return security to south Mogadishu, political chaos will follow any U.N. withdrawal," Mr. Aspin told an audience at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

"The danger we're dealing with here is that the situation will return to what existed before the United States sent in its troops" last December, Mr. Aspin said.

President Bill Clinton's decision last weekend to send 400 army Rangers to Somalia to supplement the approximately 1,200 combat troops already there (See page 2) prompted new questions from members of Congress and others about the U.S. goal for Somalia.

Seeking to address those questions, Mr. Aspin said Mr. Clinton

was determined to "stay the course" in Somalia until U.S. and United Nations forces can not only provide adequate security in Mogadishu but also help the Somalis begin to rebuild their country.

"President Clinton has directed that U.S. forces remain long enough to complete their mission and no longer," Mr. Aspin said. "The completion of the mission chiefly concerns security in Somalia." He said that includes three main goals.

"First, the security issue in south Mogadishu must be settled," he said without elaborating.

Second, "we must make real progress towards" taking heavy weapons out of the hands of the Somali warlords, and third, there must be credible police forces in at least the major population centres.

"When these three conditions are met... then I believe that the U.S. Quick Reaction Forces can come back," he said, adding that the approximately 2,800 U.S. support force could be reduced when security is good enough to enable the large-scale hiring of civilians to perform the support functions for the United Nations there.

Defence sources said the U.S. new arrivals in Somalia included members of an elite counter-terrorist unit known as Delta Force, trained in daring behind-the-scenes operations and prepared to search out and capture fugitive Somali warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed.

NBC news reported on Friday that should the troops capture Gen. Aideed, the United Nations was considering options including holding him on islands off the Somali coast or aboard a ship until a court system can be re-established in Somalia to put the warlord on trial.

U.N. commanders blame Gen. Aideed for a violence that has disrupted food distribution and nation-building in Somalia, and Mr. Aspin said that violence must be ended.

In south Mogadishu, the Aideed stronghold, we have a major challenge to the whole U.N. enterprise," Mr. Aspin said.

But he did not comment on reports that a special unit had been sent in to pursue and capture Gen. Aideed, who has been on the U.N. command's wanted list since an ambush that killed 24 Pakistani peacekeepers earlier this year.

Iraq burning Shiite villages — U.S.

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Baghdad is torching Shiite villages in an attempt to wipe out the villagers' culture in the marshlands of southern Iraq, the United States said Friday.

The State Department, which has also accused Iraq of draining and burning the marshes and shelling civilians, called on the international community to demand Iraq comply at once with the U.N. Security Council resolution designed to protect the Shiites.

Iraq is trying to deprive the Shiites of food and water, and to destroy the marsh dwellers' ancient culture, the State Department said.

"The government of Iraq's campaign of destruction and repression in the marshes of southern Iraq continues. Despite repeated calls by the international community for Iraq to respect the requirements of U.N. Security

Council Resolution 688, which calls on Iraq to cease its repression of the Iraqi people, the government of Iraq is intensifying its repressive tactics," said the State Department.

"We have verified extensive draining and burning of the marshes, the burning of villages, and ongoing artillery attacks on civilian centres. By destroying the fragile marsh environment, the government of Iraq is seeking to deprive innocent civilians of their principal source of food and shelter. The Iraqi government's tactics are designed to eradicate a culture which has been present in the marshes of thousands of years, and eliminate a fragile eco-system unique in the region."

"The United States is appraising the United Nations Human Rights Center of the Iraqi government's repressive campaign in the southern marshes. On August 20, the U.N. Sub-Commission on

Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities passed a resolution condemning the human rights violations of the Iraqi regime, and urging the application of Resolution 688. We applaud the sub-commission's call for a visit by U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in Iraq, Max van der Stoep, to visit the region and interview refugees fleeing the persecution of the Iraqi regime."

"The United States strongly denounces the government of Iraq's gross abuses of human rights and urges the international community to join it in demanding that Iraq immediately comply with the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688. The United States and its coalition partners will continue to enforce the "no-fly zone" established a year ago in southern Iraq to monitor Iraq's compliance with Resolution 688."

Peace talks may require new venue — Maksoud

WASHINGTON (USIA) — While all parties to the 11th round of Middle East peace talks resuming here Aug. 31 "are inevitably going to participate," following Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region, "indications are that the talks are nearing a major turning point. Dr. Clovis Maksoud, former Arab League ambassador to the United States, said Friday.

Appearing on his return from Lebanon at a press conference sponsored by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Dr. Maksoud said that while Arab delegations will participate, they will attend "out of recognition of the U.S. commitment to the process," rather than out of conviction that progress will be made.

"There is a widespread impression throughout the Arab World — which I share — that the United States is addicted to the process, but it is not necessarily — at this moment at least — committed to results," Dr. Maksoud said. Prospects for progress remain in question, he added, "because of certain imbalances" between Arab and Israeli delegations.

"The peace process is being resumed amidst multiple imbalances of power strategically in the region," he said. These imbalances exist not only between Israel and Arab countries, but even among Arab

states, he said, and they "diminish expectations for current rounds of the process."

Citing examples of the imbalances perceived by the Arab World, Dr. Maksoud said that in the 10th round of talks, the United States "removed the term 'occupied territories' in its working papers."

And in the recent conflict in southern Lebanon, he said, the U.S. is perceived to have empathised with Israel, "although they tried to broker a ceasefire." Nevertheless, that perception "mitigates against the objectivity expected of a sponsor of the peace process," he said.

Dr. Maksoud said that another development among the participants has been the current turmoil among Palestinians who come to the talks "without a government or a clear-cut authority" and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"If the peace option to which the Palestinian mainstream is committed does not deliver, then naturally, the radical elements in the Palestinian constituency (will) hit a responsive chord," he said.

He said the ongoing debate "means that the Palestinian patience with the process is reaching a breaking point, and before it breaks it is important that the United States weighs in on Israel to be more forthcoming in its commitment to

Middle East policy to be open to input from the international community," he said.

If the 11th round does not produce a breakthrough in terms of soliciting from Israel the acknowledgement that it is an occupying power in the occupied territories, Dr. Maksoud suggested that "the Arab parties and the United States should begin to entertain the view of moving the entire process to the United Nations Security Council."

Such a decision might be rebutted in the immediate future, but in the long range "would service America's commitment to a just peace in the region," he said.

Moreover, the U.N. Security Council "is a legitimate framework," and the move "enables all parties to buy time to put their political orientation in order," he argued.

Asked if Israel cannot be expected to reject referral of the process to the United Nations, Dr. Maksoud said, "try it and see."

"The Clinton administration has indicated that it wants to enhance the role of the United Nations," Dr. Maksoud pointed out, adding that the United Nations is already engaged in the region and "has become the international instrument of peace-keeping and peace making."

Arafat awaits U.S., Russian reaction to his plan

PARIS (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has called on Russia and the United States to react to his proposal to put the Gaza Strip and Jericho under Palestinian control.

Speaking on Radio-France Internationale, Mr. Arafat said he was waiting for "the reaction of the two Russian and American co-sponsors of the peace process" to his proposal.

The two countries are co-sponsors of the Middle East peace talks, which are due to convene in Washington on Tuesday.

"Any agreement needs their acceptance," he said.

Mr. Arafat also indicated he was not the sole source of the proposal, saying "when the Israelis mentioned a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, I answered 'Why just Gaza?... there should be another withdrawal...'" and I proposed the Jericho area."

He stressed there should be "a complete agreement" for a statement in principle concerning "the interim period in our occupied territories," but there must be an Israeli "withdrawal as a form of disengagement" from Gaza and Jericho.

"Jerusalem would be a part of the occupied territories under the transitional Palestinian self-government which would be elected during legislative elections," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat said he had also proposed that Arab East Jerusalem should be placed under the authority of an interim Palestinian self-government.

"As to Jerusalem, it will be part of occupied territories placed under the Palestinian authority of interim self-government that will be elected in parliamentary elections," Mr. Arafat told Radio France Internationale.

According to RFI's French translation of the interview, Mr. Arafat did not specify he was speaking about Arab East Jerusalem which Israel occupied in the 1967 war. But the peace talks only cover the territories occupied in 1967.

A member of a team supervising Palestinian negotiators at Middle East peace talks said on Friday a deal with Israel on partial withdrawal from the occupied territories was close.

Azmi Shuaibi said Palestinians had proposed Israel withdraw first from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and he believed Israel had accepted the idea.

A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin stopped short of denying the report and advised watching developments at the 11th round of peace talks.

Mr. Arafat said the Washington talks would produce an agreement on interim self-government, and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho would establish a link between provisional self-government and the final status of the Israeli-occupied territories.

Several PLO leaders have voiced reservations about Mr. Arafat's approval for an early Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, fearing Israel may refuse further concessions and it might become the final settlement.

Blast suspects on hunger-strike

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Nine of the 15 suspects charged in connection with the World Trade Centre bombing and a plot against other New York targets are on hunger strike to protest prison conditions, their lawyers said.

Among those on hunger strike was Mohammad Salameh, the first person to be arrested in connection with the Feb. 26 bombing that left six people dead and 1,000 injured.

Mr. Salameh's lawyer, Robert Precht, said his client had not eaten or drunk anything since last Sunday.

Mr. Precht said his client and the other hunger-strikers were protesting being kept in solitary confinement for 23 hours each day since March.

The trial of the 15 suspects, including cleric Omar Abdul Rahman who was charged on Wednesday, could last four months, according to U.S. judicial officials.

The sheikh pleaded innocent Thursday to charges that he led a conspiracy to bomb targets including the World Trade Centre and planned assassinations and kidnappings.

His 14 co-defendants pleaded innocent to the same charges. An indictment on Wednesday charged the group with conspiring to wage a war of urban terrorism on the United States.

Lawyer also said Mr. Salameh was being denied Arabic religious material because the jail doesn't have a translator to verify whether the books are a security risk.

Mr. Precht said Mr. Salameh's "physical and emotional health has been undermined" because of conditions at the jail.

Mr. Precht put the number on strike at four but an attorney for defendant Bilal Alkai said a total of nine men charged in either the trade centre bombing or the plot to blow up the United Nations and other New York landmarks had joined in the protest.

Prison spokesmen were not immediately available for comment.

Muslim spokesmen say the conspiracy indictment against sheikh Abdul Rahman and 14 associates is fuelling religious bigotry, but the cleric's lawyers said Friday he is confident his client can get a fair trial.

"It's going to be a nice legal war. Our time will be come," Harry Batchelder, retained by Sheikh Abdul Rahman just this week, told Reuters in an interview.

He said that while he was not going to "minimise the problem" of government leaks, he added that he was confident that Federal Judge Michael Kafsey would handle the matter fairly.

"He's terrifically fair. He's concerned, and he won't take any nonsense from anybody — the government or the defence," he said.

As for Sheikh Abdul Rahman's alleged involvement in the bombing plot conspiracy, Mr. Batchelder said: "Take a look at his physical appearance? Does he look like a hands-on guy?"

But defence lawyer Ron Kuby, representing one of the other defendants in the case, says the government created a "mythical Islamic conspiracy" to help them win a conviction in the case.

He has argued that leaks of damaging evidence by the prosecution have made it nearly impossible for the defendants to get a fair trial.

He and others involved in the case say the government has whipped up anti-Islamic fury.

"There is a good deal of hostility against the Arabs and the Muslims because the media uses guilt by association against Islam," said Mohammed Mehdi, a close friend of Sheikh Abdul Rahman.

"The Muslims in the 1990s in America represent what the communists were in the 1950s — someone to hate," he said. Dr. Mehdi said he has received a sharp increase in the number of harassing phone calls and says other Islamic figures have re-

ported similar increases.

Militants issue warning

A Muslim militant group in Egypt warned Friday it would take revenge on anybody who harmed Sheikh Abdul Rahman.

A spokesman for Al Gamaa Al Islamiya (Islamic Group), which has been waging a campaign of violence to overthrow the Egyptian government, told a reporter that Sheikh Abdul Rahman was the "spiritual guide" of the movement.

"We will take revenge violently, maybe more violently than they can bear. They will regret what they are doing if there is harm to doctor Omar Abdul Rahman," the official said. Both he and the reporter asked not to be named in the Cairo report.

The spokesman declined to name any particular targets for revenge and made it clear that merely indicting Sheikh Abdul Rahman did not constitute harming him.

The U.S. embassy in Cairo has warned the 20,000 Americans living in Egypt to review security following the charging of Sheikh Abdul Rahman.

A security notice distributed to U.S. businesses and citizens on Thursday quoted the State Department as saying the indictment of Sheikh Abdul Rahman "will be met with outrage by his followers in Egypt and with varying degrees of disapproval in other parts of the Islamic World."

"His followers in Egypt have the capacity to conduct bombings and small arms attacks and could expand their range of targets from Egyptians and foreign tourists to include U.S. government and other U.S. targets."

"His followers in Pakistan and Sudan could attack U.S. government targets. Scattered demonstrations or sporadic acts of violence in support of the sheikh cannot be ruled out," the State Department statement said.

Sudan will not cut staff in U.S.

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — Sudan has said that it would not reduce the size of its embassy staff in Washington despite the U.S. decision to send away all dependents from Khartoum and scale down its diplomatic contingent.

Hundreds of thousands of Sudanese took to the capital's streets Tuesday to denounce Washington for accusing Sudan of sponsoring "international terrorism." Demonstrators demanded that U.S. diplomats be kicked out. The United States announced its personnel cutbacks the next day.

Omar Baridou, first under-secretary at the Foreign Ministry, announced Sudan's decision not to reciprocate to the government newspaper Al Engaz Al Watani.

But the ministry clearly was displeased with the U.S. move. The director of technical and economic cooperation, Yusef Mukhtar, described it as a "political escalation" further souring U.S.-Sudanese relations.

Mr. Mukhtar told an interviewer on Sudan's official television channel that neither U.S. diplomatic staff nor other Americans face danger in Sudan.

The U.S. State Department has warned Americans for years of the danger of travelling in Sudan.

The United States evacuated staff and dependents from Khartoum in April 1996. That withdrawal followed an attack by still-undiscovered gunmen on a U.S. communications technician, who was seriously wounded. The attack near the Libyan embassy occurred within hours of punitive U.S. bombing raids on Tripoli and Benghazi.

On the Thursday night television programme discussing the latest removal of Americans, legislator Kabashour Kuku said he sees the partial evacuation as "an invitation for other U.S. allies to take a similar move."

'Relief blocked'

The Sudanese government, fighting Christian rebels in the south, is blocking aid to non-Muslim people in the region and up to 600,000 could starve to death, an Australian aid agency official said Saturday.

Graham Romanes, African programme manager for Community Aid Abroad, said Sudanese officials had halted relief to 500,000 people in the Nuba mountains for the past year and reports from those leaving the region spoke of a famine.

He said 100,000 people in the southwestern region of Darfur

were also facing starvation because of the fighting.

Mr. Romanes, whose agency has conducted relief operations in Sudan since 1984, visited the country last month. He said reports reaching the agency's offices in Sudan warned of a major famine in progress.

"The government has effectively blocked the Nuba mountains," Romanes told Reuters from Melbourne. "It is impossible to get relief into the area."

This (famine) is becoming larger than Somalia and much bigger than Ethiopia was in 1984 and 1985."

Community aid abroad said in a statement that its office in Nyala, capital of the Darfur region, was ordered closed on Monday by the government which considered it a security risk.

The operations of the agency's project partner, the Sudanese Popular Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation (SPCR), had also been shut down, with staff locked out of their buildings and their vehicles taken, the statement said.

Washington (USIA) —

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The pivotal role of the United States in the process provides the United States with an historic opportunity to allow its

COLUMN 8

Clinton bumps bodyguards

EDGARTOWN, Mass. (AP)

President Bill Clinton turned off his protectors Friday. Actually, he backed straight into them. Mr. Clinton, driving a golf cart with friend Vernon Jordan at his side, had pulled up briefly in front of a golf course clubhouse. When he got back in, he threw the cart into reverse and backed up, striking a cart carrying Secret Service agents. It was a light bump, sort of like those in electric bumper cars at fairs and amusement parks. Hillary Rodham Clinton joined her husband on the 18th hole and took a few shots, drawing cheers from the crowd.

"What do I hit it with?" she asked golf pro Tim Spring. A proud husband beamed later about his wife's performance. "She hadn't hit a ball in 13 or 14 years. He (Spring) did a pretty good job for her," he said. Martha's Vineyard, the Atlantic offshore island where the Clintons are vacationing, is not exactly a hotbed of Republicanism, but opposition party residents seemed as pleased as Democrats to have the president visit this resort island. Asked after his golf game Friday whether he was looking at real estate on the island, Mr. Clinton replied, "No, but I would like to do it. I don't know if I can afford to do it."

Mr. Clinton, a president of relatively modest means, was asked whether he thought the property on Martha's Vineyard was too pricey. "I don't even know what they cost," he said. "I just think it's a beautiful place. I wish I had about another week to stay. I'm a little spoiled now."

King's wedding anniversary could spark regal romances

OSLO (AP) — Paparazzi, take note. Newspapers, save those pages. Cupid, get to work. The reason? Most of Europe's unmarried princes and princesses will meet up next week for a royal cruise on Norway's fjords. A Dutch newspaper has dubbed the excursion a Royal "love boat."

The unwed bluebloods are attending 25th wedding anniversary celebrations for King Harald V and Queen Sonja Sunday. Most will accompany their parents, the kings and queens of six monarchies. But Norwegians, Britons, Dutch, Swedes and Danes will be keeping their eyes on two related events: Royal parties in Oslo this weekend and a three-day shipboard tour of the western fjords that starts Monday. The tour will take place in two boats, the Norwegian King's yacht, Norge, and Denmark's Royal Dannebrog. "It's like it was made for royal romances," gushed the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet. "Ready for romance," cheered the Oslo newspaper Verdens Gang. "Seldom have so many young people from Europe's noble houses been gathered."

Among the 14 young and single royals expected to join the celebrations are: Great Britain's 29-year-old Prince Edward; Crown Prince Haakon, 20, of Norway. Also on the list: Denmark's 25-year-old Crown Prince Frederik and his brother Prince Joachim, 24; Sweden's Crown Princess Victoria, 16; Spain's Princess Elena, 29